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THE WILDERNESS ROAD

THE WILDERNESS ROAD

A ROMANCE OF ST. CLAIR'S DEFEAT AND WAYNE'S VICTORY

BY

JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER

AUTHOR OF A HERALD OF THE WEST,
IN CIRCLING CAMPS, A SOLDIER OF MANHATTAN,
THE SUN OF SARATOGA, ETC.

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THE WILDERNESS ROAD

CHAPTER I

BY RULE AND COMPASS

THEY were dividing lands—enough for a nation—with a rule and compass, and their faces showed their feelings as they bent over the map and cut off a principality for each. Jasper's lips were quite white—it was a curious trick that he had when he was deeply moved—and Mr. Carew watched the lines on the paper with an intent gaze. I knew that avarice and ambition were working somewhere back of his eyes, and, for the moment, I wondered that a man who had so much should crave so much more.

"Our grant covers all the region here along the Miami and the Little Wabash," said Mr. Carew, turning to me, "and I am told that the soil is most fertile, is it not?"

"There is none better," I replied.

"We shall take it at once and have it surveyed. It is well to attend to these matters promptly," said Jasper.

"But you forget that the land is occupied already," I said. It was the first time I had spoken, unless asked a question.

Mr. Carew looked up from the map, and there was inquiry in the gaze that he turned upon me.

"The tribes," I added. "It is their home and hunt-

ing ground. They are numerous and warlike. You remember Harmar?"

Mr. Carew made a gesture of contempt.

"The affair of Harmar was nothing, and these tribes are nothing," he said. "St. Clair will brush them out of the way. He is coming with an army, you know, and we shall concern ourselves no further about savages."

I shook my head, but I did not speak, knowing how vain my words would be; and they, turning back to the map, began to divide anew the lands which another race held. I saw the same look upon the faces of them all—Jasper, Mr. Carew, the large man Curry, and the slim-faced lawyer Knowlton. It was a fine map, in beautiful blues and reds and yellows, but it seems to me that any map of the West should be all red. We had to colour it thus to buy it.

I watched them a little as they parcelled so easily among themselves the country that others would have to water with their blood, and then I felt the eyes of Rose Carew upon me.

"You think they are making the division too soon," she said, knowing that the others, their souls gripped by earth-hunger, would not hear.

"They have bought, from those who can not sell, something which they can not take," I replied.

"You know this wilderness?"

"As well as any man, I suppose. Their rule and compass go through it without a halt, but they in person can not do as much."

She had regarded me before with curiosity, and the same question was in her look now. I saw that my manner and speech, contrasting with my garb—half wild, half civilized—puzzled her, but I did not seek to change either gesture or accent.

"And your name is Lee, too," she said, "the same as Captain Lee's?"

"Lee is a common name in both East and West, and its ownership means nothing."

Jasper looked covertly at me, with his sly and hateful smile, but I ignored him.

"Will you come to the door, Miss Carew?" I asked.

She glanced at her father and his friends.

"They will not miss you at this moment," I said.

Nor would they. There was nothing in the world just then so beautiful to them as the vivid blues and reds and yellows of their map. Miss Carew sighed a little as she read the emotions of her father, and then came with me.

"Do you see that woman passing?" I said. "She had a husband and children once; the tomahawk took them. And the boy there; he is the only one left of his name; the tribes slew all the others, but spared him for ransom. And yonder is another woman waiting for her husband to come back from the forest; he will never come. I know where his bones lie, but I dare not tell her."

"Why do you speak to me of these dreadful things?" she asked, the colour leaving her face.

I was silent then, because I was thinking of her father as he apportioned to himself the soil on which our powerful foe lived; but when I looked into this girl's pure eyes I knew that I could not cite such a contrast to her. Instead I said:

"It is well to know what a new land costs us. And no one can say that we shall keep it even at such a price."

"You are a prophet of evil," she said.

"Some one should be so, when others think to wish a thing is to have it. The arm of the nation is weak, and it is a long way across the mountains."

Perhaps I should not have spoken in such a manner to a young girl, but I knew how the land about me had been harried and torn. Moreover, I felt a certain sense

of anger in the presence of these people from the East, who would not understand us, and dismissed all our troubles and triumphs alike as trifles. This was to them but the back door of the nation, and yet ruin may come in as readily by the back as the front door.

"I do not like to hear of these slaughters and captures," she said. "They were so strange and far away when I was at home in Philadelphia that one never thought much of them. They have scarcely seemed real."

"That is just the trouble," I replied.

As she stood there, in rich attire, her face unburned by the sun, she typified this difference. What the West suffered was in truth far away and unreal to her.

Mr. Carew, raising his head from the map, called his daughter, and she turned back, but before going asked me:

"Shall we see you once more while we are in Danville, Mr. Lee?"

"I do not know," I replied.

"Come again," she said, "and tell me of this wilderness. It has its romance."

"A romance when seen from afar," I replied. But I promised to come.

I was followed from the house by Jasper, though not knowing it until he stood beside me, with his hand lightly touching my arm.

"You create difficulties for us, John," he said.

"One can not create that which exists already," I replied.

"But St. Clair will brush them out of the way, as Mr. Carew told you. Remember that these tribes have not yet had to face our best."

"The best are always ourselves."

He laughed lightly.

"It is true. I too shall go with St. Clair, and

so certain am I of the result that I have been, as you saw, selecting my share of that wilderness through which you roam. Yet I avow that I did not expect to meet you here when I came across the mountains. May I ask what you are doing in Kentucky, Cousin John?"

"There were cities of refuge in the olden times," I said, "and there are countries of refuge now. It is to one such that I have come."

He looked thoughtful, puckering his thin lips, and not speaking for another minute or two, although he kept by my side. I wondered why he had not denounced me, especially when he found me in the company set aside for himself.

"It behooves you to walk in a straight path, John," he said at length, "and I shall keep silent about you if you do as you should."

His tone was patronizing, and therefore most insulting, but I did not reply. Yet I resolved that my actions should not wait upon his pleasure, whatsoever the result.

"I have chosen a course," I said, "and I shall follow it."

"Are you averse to telling it?"

"Not at all. I have decided to serve with St. Clair."

He puckered his lips again.

"It is dangerous," he said. "I advise you not to do so."

"I thank you for your advice," I replied, "but my mind is quite made up."

He changed the subject, though I was sure that it was still in his mind, and began to talk to me of his prosperity, no sense of delicacy keeping him back. He and Mr. Carew were fast friends, he said, and they had obtained great land grants in the West, where climate and soil alike were of the best. He was to become the richest man in America, and soon he should want a

wife. Then he spoke of Rose Carew, and I could have wished her a better fate.

I own that I felt much bitterness at this moment. The contrast between Jasper's career and mine seemed so great that the spirit in me was not improved when he went back to Mr. Carew and his daughter.

CHAPTER II

THE CRY FOR REVENGE

We had in Danville the next day one of those public meetings which we call a convention. Kentucky was to become a State in the following year, and her leaders would take measures for that important event. Moreover, they were to send men to St. Clair, for, as I have said, it was a heroic vanguard which bled and suffered much and never gave back; but that terrible cloud of Indian war in the North had long hung upon it, and the air was growing too heavy to breathe. They must have relief, and it was St. Clair who should bring it. Therefore they, the men of the border, in their absolute freedom, hating military leaders and military discipline, would give to St. Clair all the help that they could, hoping to find relief through him. So they came, and, whether it was for peace or war, every one brought a rifle. The time was not yet, when a man in the West could afford to ride without a weapon in his hand.

It was a serious and solemn race that gathered there, bearing already upon its face the stamp of its trials, and the prevailing note that day in the voice of all these men was the cry for revenge. When you study their case you will not blame them. I do not find in history a record of any people who endured more cruel sufferings than they. It is an honour to be the vanguard of a mighty movement, but you pay a price. In all that crowd there was scarcely one who knew what it was to have an untroubled night's sleep. At any

moment he might hear the blow of his cruel enemy at the door. When he came from his work in the field he would hasten his footsteps to see if his house had been burned and his wife and children slain in his absence. As he passed through the forest he looked about him with wary eyes, for behind any tree his ambushed foe might be lurking; and in winter, when the work was over and he sat before the red coals, he always listened amid the chatter of the children for something else. His intent ear dreaded to hear outside the soft crunch of moccasined feet on the snow, and his eye often turned to the rifle lying on its hooks on the wall. It was no wonder that he prized this weapon next to wife and children, insisted that it always be of the finest make, and that it should be, too, his chosen comrade, cleaving to him even closer than a wife; there was safety, what safety was to be had, in its long barrel—not for himself alone, but for the others who clung to him and looked to him for protection.

Even a stranger would have noted the effect of such a life upon these men. In the town itself they were wary and suspicious, keeping their rifles in their hands, examining everybody with care, looking about for enemies, eyes keen and shifting like those of a tiger, since danger might come from any point of the compass. The faces were thin and seamed. Long years of watching had left deep lines there. They had been forced to adopt the tactics of their elusive foe, to acquire the skill of the wild animal, in sight, scent, and sound, and in following his customs they had borrowed some of the nature of that foe. They, too, were fierce and relentless toward their enemies, but very generous to their friends.

To-day they called for revenge. There was nothing said about the right cheek. Had one among them preached such a doctrine, the others would have turned upon him in amazement and equal anger. There was

no man who had not suffered from the red enemy. From nearly every house a wife or son or daughter had been taken, never to come back again. So those who were left remembered only their griefs, and did not pause to consider the claims of their enemies. That was to them sheer nonsense, a waste of time. What they wanted was blood for blood. I repeat that a wild life among wild foes does not teach softness, and their cry was natural. Moreover, they wished their revenge to be sweeping and final. They were sorry that St. Clair's army was not to be three or four times larger. They wanted nothing to be left of the tribes. They would exterminate them, because there is no peace with poisonous snakes; they would destroy the villages to the last lodge, and make the dark woods across the Ohio, which looked so threatening, and kept their threats, as safe as the open fields in the East. They were impatient, too, with that East which seemed so far away and so indifferent. Men there, who knew nothing about the savages, shilly-shallied with them, they said, and talked about treaties and mutual rights, while they of the West lay under the tomahawk and saw their wives and children scalped and slain. So their anger against the East increased, and many thought that they should not join St. Clair and submit to the noxious military rule of those whom they considered so much less skilful than themselves; an independent force would be better, and then they might do what seemed most fit. But the advice of others prevailed; the soldiers and the Westerners should be united, and when the blow was struck it could be struck with all the greater force.

These men met, amid surroundings of absolute democracy, in the open air under the shade of mighty oaks and beeches, and each said the thing that was in his mind. One was as good as another. There were to be no officers until they were chosen by the

crowd, and then the others would obey them—if they saw fit.

The setting of this scene appealed to me, even with all my experience of the West, because I knew that from this little centre the men of my race, so long held to the seashore by the ridge of mountains behind us, would spread over a continent.

It was early autumn. The leaves bore the first delicate tints of red and yellow, and afar the forest glowed. The air, pure and clear, was a joy to breathe, and the glorious foliage hid the newness of the little town beside us. Danville was an island of civilization in a wilderness, but here were the men who would make good their kingdom.

Miss Carew was among those who looked on, and I soon found myself near her. The scene impressed her imagination too; she saw its poetry, and her deepest feelings were stirred. But she paled a little as she listened to the fiery speeches.

"How dark and fierce they look!" she said.

"You can understand what they feel only when you become one of their kind," I replied.

"I am beginning to understand," she continued. "But I wish, Mr. Lee, that they would not regard themselves as separate from the rest of us. The East is not hard and insensible; it simply does not know, or rather it does not know all."

"They are a valiant race," said Mr. Carew.

"They have need to be," I added.

Mr. Carew presently left us, taking with him Jasper, who had made himself one of our company, and began to talk with the Kentuckians. I saw readily his design, a plan in which he wished Jasper to help. He had a great stake in the West, and meant to become one of its people; he would please them and grow popular among them, thus opening the road to high advancement. So thinking, he exercised all his arts, which

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"You were ever a fool, John Lee," I said to myself, "and time can not cure you."

I turned away again and met Knowlton. I disliked the man. We are open and free in our dealings with each other in the wilderness, with but little taste for the law and its chicane. Moreover, Knowlton was an unpleasing specimen of his class. I would have passed him, but he clung to me.

"A great man!" he said, nodding toward Mr. Carew's house.

"By which I take it that you mean Mr. Carew."

"Even so," he replied.

"I do not know," I said; "but if he does not possess greatness he craves it."

But Knowlton would have it that Mr. Carew was already the most promising figure in the West; he was rich—richer than any other this side of the mountains—his influence was bound to extend in the Western country wherever white men lived, and there was no honour which might not be his for the winning. Nor would his friends be forgotten. This last clause I suspected was of the utmost importance to Mr. Knowlton. But he skimmed lightly over it, and talked of the opportunities sure to come when St. Clair should have crushed the Northwestern Confederation. Then all would recognise the importance of Mr. Carew in furthering this expedition.

"Perhaps the first governorship of the State will not be too great a reward for him," said Knowlton.

"I think he is not to have it," I replied. "The people are more likely to choose a man who has shared their dangers. Like likes like. The bravest fighter is yet the most valuable citizen here, and some one of those whom you saw in that group under the trees is almost sure to be the first ruler of this new State."

He received my words with a discontented air, but did not return directly to the subject of Mr. Carew's

promotion. I would have left him then perforce, but I stopped to listen to many hoof-beats. It was those who had gathered that day riding home, either to prepare for the war or to stand guard while the others fought. These I knew were the makers of the West, and not such as Knowlton or Mr. Carew; a race of men in the depths of the wilderness who had forgotten how to laugh. They came in the morning in silence, and now they were going back at night in the same silence, sombre but resolute.

I suppose that thoughts of this kind were passing through Knowlton's mind, too, as he stopped with me and listened without a word until the sound of the last hoof-beat died. Then he left me, saying, "You shall see me again very soon, Mr. Lee."

I returned at the appointed time, and when I knocked upon the Carew door it was Rose Carew who received me, holding a candle high above her head, and peering into the darkness to see who came. I noticed then how tall and straight she was, the deep blue of her eyes, and the yellow gold of her hair. With her easy grace and frank ways she was a new type in the West, where woman, like man, under the shadow of countless dangers, was yet shy and difficult. She had shown me friendship from the first—blended, so I thought, with a certain restrained curiosity as to what I was. Her uncertainty about me, I was reader enough of women's hearts to know, was not my loss.

"You come with so light a step that I heard only your knock," she said. "Do you know that this is what has impressed me most in the West—the footfalls of men and women make no sound."

"The first children in Kentucky learned early to be soundless as they passed," I replied. "It was always better—at least far safer—to hear than to be heard."

"What a life!"

"And yet many have lived it."

"They are waiting for you in the next room," she continued. "I suppose that you are to plan some great campaign, while I stay here and read a book. But I am not sure that I shall not be the better employed."

I went into the apartment she designated and found Mr. Carew, Knowlton, and Jasper there—Mr. Carew expansive and smiling, Knowlton furtive and watchful, and Jasper silent. Mr. Carew welcomed me with great warmth. But his cordiality always seemed to me too inclusive; it was elastic enough to embrace all who might be of use. He gave me a glass of wine, the first that had passed my lips in ten years, but I drank it and put the glass back upon the table without comment.

"Are you an expert in wines?" asked Jasper, with his usual covert sneer.

"Why do you ask?" I replied.

"I thought that you might be," he said.

Mr. Carew did not notice, but Knowlton gave me a quick, inquiring look. However, he remained silent, and Jasper, too, said nothing more just then.

"I want to talk to you again about the Northwest," began Mr. Carew, in smooth, persuasive tones. "You rove at random through the wilderness, and, as you have told me, you know this country well. It is fertile, and its value must be great when these pestilent tribes shall have been cleared away."

"Undoubtedly," I said.

"The grants of myself and my associates cover a large part of this wilderness," he continued, "and as soon as St. Clair finishes his task we shall want to turn it to account. We shall need some one who knows the country well to guide us in our surveys, and we think that we have found such a man."

His intent was now clear to me, and I quickly ran the matter over in my mind.

"In brief," he said, with the air of one who does an important favour, "it is you of whom we are thinking.

I am the head of this affair, Captain Lee is my lieutenant, Mr. Knowlton keeps us informed about the law which goes into the very marrow of the case, and you are to be our guide through the woods."

Had any one told me a week earlier that I was to accept such an offer, I should have laughed at him. Even Jasper saw the oddity of the situation, for when I caught his eyes there was in them a flicker of amusement. His look decided any lingering doubts that I may have felt. I did not wish Jasper to be amused at my expense.

"You make no movement until after St. Clair wins his victory?" I asked Mr. Carew. "Because I go with him, as I told you, and my service there precludes my work with you until the former shall have been finished."

"Certainly not," he replied. "'Twould indeed be premature for us to go into the Northwest now. Moreover, Captain Lee also marches with St. Clair. As you see, all our movements wait upon those of the general."

"Then, with this proviso—not until after St. Clair's victory—I shall enlist in your employ," I said.

Mr. Carew seemed pleased, though Jasper looked black; but at that moment my thoughts were in the next room.

I shall admit that I felt compunctions when I entered into this agreement, though I was drawn on by something foreign to the matter in hand, and thinking, too, perhaps, that it was a vague affair which could never come to a head. But Mr. Carew did not consider it such. He talked very freely now of great opportunities. The white wave was soon to roll on and submerge all that opposed it, and those who came close behind should reap great profits. I listened to him awhile, and then I told him that I must go, as I was to depart in a day or so for the Northwest.

"Do not forget your promise," he said, giving me his hand.

"I shall not," I replied, and I left them. Jasper rose to follow me, but Mr. Carew called him, and again I found Rose Carew alone. I stopped a moment, though feeling that I should not do so.

"Is the great campaign launched?" she asked, looking up from her book.

"It is," I replied, "and I am to enter your father's service after St. Clair shall have defeated the Indians."

"And he will defeat them, will he not?" she asked. "I have heard so much of those cruel tribes, Mr. Lee, that I begin now to share your Western feelings. St. Clair is sure to crush them, is he not?"

"No one knows," I replied, "but I am certain that the hopes of all the West go with St. Clair."

I lingered yet a little longer, and she showed me a mind that could grasp the affairs of a statesman—perhaps not so uncommon a quality in woman as we think. She was the most zealous of patriots, and all the country back to the Pacific she wished to be ours.

"We must not let the powers of Europe forestall us," she said.

"The Romans won the world by shortening their swords," I replied, "and what we have here under our hands no nation across the sea can prevent us from holding."

She spoke again of her father's plan. She seemed to know somewhat of its nature, and not wholly to favour it. She, like myself, believed, apparently, that the country should belong to those who were shedding their blood for it.

When I took my leave she came again to the door with her candle.

"May I light you on your way, Mr. Lee?" she said, holding it above her head as before.

And this to me, a man who had travelled night after night through the wilderness, with no light at all! But I accepted it with alacrity, and when I looked back she was still holding the candle at arm's length, and after the young face under it faded in the darkness it beamed, until it too went out.

CHAPTER III

THE TALE THE FOREST TOLD

I MET, the next morning, Winchester, the English trader with whom I had come, an honest man of open countenance, and we walked together. Yet we said little, each finding his thoughts sufficient for the moment.

I was of the forest now, and the sight of this little town rising from the recent wilderness was unreal to me. I shut my eyes, and that wilderness, sombre and unconquerable, came back again. The veneer of civilization seemed so thin and weak that a hostile touch must sweep it away. But I knew better. Where the man of my race had come to make his home there he would stay. Yet it would be a bitter struggle, and I sighed for those around me, though I saw then nothing but peace hovering over a beautiful open country of grassy hills and slopes, with the little city set in the centre like a jewel.

While we walked a procession came into the town, and it was of a kind not strange to the West. Two half-grown girls, rescued from the savages, were just returning to their own people, and, even as we looked, those who loved them most ran to meet the saved as if they had risen from the dead, and others crowded about, with an involuntary wish to share in the joy. Soon I saw Miss Carew standing near, and her eyes were wet.

"What you told no longer seems unreal and far away," she said.

"There is scarcely a family in Kentucky that has not lost some one," I replied.

"But these have come back."

"Most of them never come back."

Jasper approached at that moment, and began to talk to her, ignoring my presence. He would have her to think that he took a philosophical view of all such incidents. The vanguard of every nation must suffer; it shed its blood that those who came later might reap a harvest from the soil thus so richly watered. But his fine theories had no effect upon her then, and being ill-timed, were of little profit to his own cause. Yet he went with her back to her father's house, and Winchester and I remained in the open air, talking with those whom we knew upon the one topic—the advance of St. Clair and the expected destruction of the Northwestern Confederacy.

Kentucky, I repeat, had been making a lone fight, begun when our Union was in the desperate throes of the Revolutionary War, and could send no help. The resolute vanguard was surrounded by a mighty wilderness in which dwelt a wary, numerous, and cruel foe, who continually struck at it, emerging from those shades when no one knew that they came, and hiding in them again when the blow had fallen. Men bled and suffered, but never gave back an inch. I knew the dangers clustering so thickly around these people, and I knew, too, the joy that they felt as the army of St. Clair prepared for its advance into the great Northwestern forests to meet their bitter and treacherous enemy. The East, so populous and wealthy by comparison with the West, had not forgotten them, and was coming to their defence; they would be released from the long scourge, and could now develop the land as they pleased. Theirs was a rich and fine country, well worth the toil of any race to win, and they had my sympathy both in their sufferings and the hope of release.

I went again, despite Jasper's warning eyes, to the house of Mr. Carew, and in the presence of many spoke boldly with his daughter. I saw that I had stirred her imagination. I was a rover of the great wilderness; I seemed to her wild in aspect, and yet I spoke a cultivated tongue; it was the contrast that appealed to her, though she did not know it. I too was drawn, but it was by the sight of a beautiful face and the sound of a familiar accent after so many years.

As I talked to her I was smitten suddenly and so keenly with the longing for home that I was willing to risk everything, and Jasper's warning seemed to me a little thing. After all, I had nothing to lose.

Mr. Carew received me with smooth words; it was not his part to be either cold or warm until he knew his man better. I had read him from the first—a fencer by nature, one always seeking to test the guard of another and measure his skill and value to himself, John Carew. He was, in truth, to use another comparison, his own yardstick.

"You go soon to join St. Clair?" said Miss Carew to me.

"Such is my intention," I replied. "All in the West should serve now when there is so much need of it."

"And St. Clair will get a valuable soldier in Mr. Lee," said Jasper, who was near.

"I do not doubt it," said Miss Carew, coming warmly to my defence as she saw Jasper's purpose to gibe.

"An efficient and valuable officer," continued Jasper. He had given me his warning, which I had defied, and now it was evident to my mind that he wished to torture me in the presence of Miss Carew.

"I infer, from what Captain Lee said, that you have been a soldier?" she asked, turning bright and inquiring eyes upon me.

"Captain Lee sees fit to jest," I replied calmly. "I shall not be an officer with St. Clair; merely a common soldier, or rather a scout. A life spent in the wilderness fits me for nothing else."

She did not accept my statement wholly, an air of doubt hanging over her, increased speedily by Jasper's words. The man had in him something of the cat, liking to inflict cruelty for cruelty's sake. He called the past to my mind by a hundred suggestions and in a hundred ways, and yet at no time did he say anything that would give Miss Carew a clew. No, that was not his purpose. He would save his knowledge of me to use when there was a profit in it. It was not Jasper's way to waste any resource. But he let me alone by-and-bye, and I resolved to have a plain talk with him as soon as I might.

Miss Carew, with an insistence which I knew was steadily swelling Jasper's anger—and I was glad then to have his anger—kept me beside her. She wanted to hear more of the great wilderness, of the woods so dense and dark that the sunlight never entered them, of rivers unmarked and unnamed, of the vast plains beyond, and of adventures by flood and forest. The fascination and mystery of the mighty West were upon her, and though I was loath to tell at first, I soon found myself launched upon the full stream of narrative, current and wind together carrying me on. She listened like a new Desdemona, and when I stopped suddenly, recalling to myself that I was about to lose my caution, she exclaimed:

"It is, indeed, to have been a man to have seen and to have done all these things!"

"But not many can get the chance," said Jasper, over her shoulder. "There are few of us who have cause to turn wilderness rovers."

She wheeled upon him with a questioning look, but he said nothing more, and I, waiting until he left for the evening, followed close behind him.

"You wished to talk with me two nights ago, Cousin Jasper," I said, "and now I wish to talk with you."

"Well?"

"I told you then that I should serve with St. Clair."

"And I warned you against it."

"So you did, but I chose to let the warning pass; instead, I wish now to give you one. If you undertake to deride or torture me I shall reply with the sword. I do not fear you, Jasper Lee."

He gave me a look which he intended to be one of scorn, but it fell before mine.

"You grow bold in the light of a lady's smile," he said.

I felt my face flush despite myself.

"Oh, I have seen how Rose Carew hung upon your words," he continued. "You spin a fine tale, and any girl might well listen, but think who and what you are to dare so much."

"I have not dared anything yet," I said, "and your threat upon that point is not needed."

He changed suddenly from a hostile to a friendly air, asking me of my life in the woods, St. Clair's probable line of advance and the chance that the allied forces of the tribes would await his coming. He was to be on the general's staff, he added, and he anticipated honours sufficient to warm the heart of any man. I said him nay in no case, and, even as we talked, runners arrived calling for volunteers to serve with St. Clair. A great and crushing blow was to be struck, and the Kentucky militia must help.

There was a willing response, the way being prepared already. One company left Danville on the following day, and another, I heard, had gone from Lexington. The border was on fire with ardour, and people spoke of the time soon to come when the Indian tomahawk should have no more terrors for them.

I felt that I too ought to hasten, and yet I lingered

a little longer, receiving a day or two later a message from Mr. Carew that he wished to see me again.

"You are going with St. Clair," he said, when I came, "and so is Captain Jasper Lee. He is a young man who is dear to me, and with your knowledge of the forest you may help him in this arduous campaign. I think I can rely upon you to be his good friend, can I not?"

This was a strange request to make of me, that I should be the ally of Jasper, of all men in the world, in a measure watching over him and contributing to his future, and it seemed such a jest of Fate that I was tempted to smile. Yet I refrained, nor could I see anything in Mr. Carew's look to indicate a sense of the true situation.

"Captain Lee shall have all the aid that I can give him," I replied, and I spoke with truthful intent. "Perhaps he will need it. Our Eastern officers do not appreciate the immensity and dangers of the wilderness."

I was full of the subject, and I began to tell him of the vast distances, the wily character of the foe, and the ignorance inherent in such an army as St. Clair led, but he scoffed at me.

"Think you," he said, "that a nation which fought, and fought with success, all the power of Great Britain, has need to fear a few prowling savages?"

And with that I was forced to be content. He would not hear more of such talk, his mind being set upon his great land enterprises, already counting with eager anticipation the profits of the soil on which the tribes still dwelt. Then he told me that he was going on the following day to the Falls of the Ohio, and his daughter with an escort would follow later. His wife, an invalid who had come down the Ohio by boat, and who was not yet prepared to take the land journey to Danville, was there now, waiting for them.

"I shall be at the Falls myself shortly," I said, "as my duties will take me that way."

He invited me with much courtesy, in such event, to visit him and his family, and again he gave me that shrewd look by which he seemed to estimate my worth. It was increasingly evident that he thought me useful to him, and did not intend that I should wander again into the forest without returning a dividend upon my value.

I bade Miss Carew good-bye the next day, and Jasper, who was present, did not like my appearance there; nor did I fancy his calm air of ownership.

"You go into the great wilderness," she said. "I wish sometimes that I were a man, that I might penetrate its mysteries."

"It is well enough for men," I said, "but not for women."

"An excellent place for some men," said Jasper, with cunning intimation. She glanced quickly at him and then at me, but our eyes showed nothing, and presently I left her, glad that my face was turned again toward the forest. She recalled too much. I liked to be in her presence, but it made me think, neverthless, of all that I had lost, and the thought was not pleasant. I had not spent so many years in putting down memory to have it rise afresh at the mere sound of a woman's voice, and my mind turned now toward the forest and my chosen comrade, Osseo, who would meet me beyond the Ohio.

Winchester and I travelled together, he intending to follow St. Clair at once, and I to join the general a little later, a letter which reached me at Lexington from Colonel Darke, of the Kentucky militia, asking me first to obtain news of the tribes and their intentions. I saw, as we advanced, more fully than ever before, the work that was going on west of the mountains. On every side hung the cloud of Indian war—a kind of

war so terrible and ghastly that the whole tale of it can never be told—but the people still came, down the rivers, through the forest, and over the hills, stopping at nothing, daunted by no report of suffering from those who had gone before. The armies, the red and the white, gathered, but, careless of either, the men, the women, and the children advanced, lured by tales of rich soil and good climate, and anxious for new wonders. They knew that the tomahawk was there threatening them, but they dared it. If one fell beneath its edge, another was left, and the human stream flowed on.

"The earth-hunger is the keenest hunger of all, and our Anglo-Saxon race suffers most from it," said Winchester to me.

And when I judge from what I have seen and heard, I think that he was right.

I knew that the tribes would not yield this land without a struggle, and with the advantage they had in their forests I was unable to say which would succeed. They were gathering now for an effort mightier than the red man had ever made before on our soil. The great chief, Little Turtle, had called them to war, and all the valiant and numerous tribes of the Northwest were coming, the Miamis, the Shawnees, and the Wyandots leading them. Already the daring settlers beyond the Ohio beheld bloody warnings.

Winchester left me at the river, and I passed into the Northwest, following for days upon Indian traces, and finding everywhere new proofs that St. Clair would have to face the might of the allied tribes. Then I turned back toward the south, and at a place appointed by us a month before I met my friend Osseo, whose name means in the Iroquois tongue Son of the Evening Star.

He was a strange Indian in many ways. I never knew his tribe. He would paint himself, but he did not follow any method by which he could be classified.

He wore his hair sometimes in the scalp lock, and then would let it fall down his back in long, coarse strings like a horse's mane. He had some relics of a missionary education, the better parts of which he seemed to like, and he was disposed to be friendly to the whites, being well hated by the Northwestern Indians. I have always thought that he was the last survivor of some old Eastern tribe, a man without a nation. I should add to this that he was the finest master of woodcraft I ever knew, and my good friend. He was painted now as a warrior of the nation of the Iroquois, of the tribe of the Mohawks, of the totem Cahenhisnhonen.* He smiled when we met, and the corner of his eye drooped in a most suggestive manner. Osseo had a sense of humour.

"It was as such that I went among them five days ago," he said. "I was Nokalis, the Mohawk who had come from the far East to help them fight the white men, and lo! I bring news that the warriors continue to gather; they come from all the forest, and even from the grass plains beyond. It is not an idle wind that will blow into the face of the white general."

I knew that Osseo spoke the truth. What his eyes beheld was but cumulative testimony to the proof of mine, and I lingered no longer, hastening on with him toward the Falls of the Ohio.

It was only a little town by the Falls that they had built—Louisville they called it, after the French king, to whom we owed much—and my business there was of scant weight, but I did not turn back from the journey. Perhaps I should now be with St. Clair, I reflected as I went on, but it would be easy for Osseo and myself, travelling so light, to overtake the general, and I was resolute to keep my promise to Rose Carew.

I did not seek to conceal to myself the chief reason that took me to the Falls. The face of woman is beau-

* The totem or insignia of the Mohawk tribe.

tiful to all men, and one who has lived long in the woods hungers most for the sight of it. She had spoken to me with sympathy and listened in suspense to my tales of the wilderness. Nor could Jasper's sly words, with their hint at something unknown, poison her against me.

We travelled toward the southwest into the eye of the setting sun, and drew near our destination, crossing the Ohio at last, and pursuing our journey along the southern shore, within the line of travel now from the older towns like Danville and Lexington to the Falls. It was the same beautiful country, a little wilder perhaps, with higher hills and deeper forests, but, like the region which we call the Bluegrass, a noble territory for the white man to win.

And it was not yet won. The axe had just begun to level the oaks, and here was where the red warriors passed but yesterday; yonder across the broad stream they still lay in the unbroken forests. Truly it was a black wilderness on the other shore, and good cause had the white women of this new land to look toward it in dread and fear.

"The warriors are there," said Osseo, following my eyes, "and the river will not hold them back."

He spoke the truth. While St. Clair prepared to crush them the tribes were striking. Daring bands more than once had crossed the Ohio into the land which they still claimed, and the tomahawk was falling on defenceless heads. Hoyoquim, the chief of the Wyandots, the boldest of all the Northwestern warriors, led the strongest party, it was said, and we found the terror of his advance spreading before us. Armed men were gathering, but none could tell where such an elusive foe would pass or when he would strike. It was like pursuing a shadow.

"They reach out a hand for Hoyoquim," said Osseo, "and he is not there. While they wonder, he strikes from behind; and then he is gone, and no one can follow."

He described the case truly, and I hastened our journey, being told, at a house within one day's travel of the Falls, that a lady riding with three men, the latter evidently of inferior degree, had passed but a few hours before. "Tall, with blue eyes, yellow hair like corn silk, and very young," they said, and I knew that it was Rose Carew. The men most likely were in her father's employ, and were the escort of which he had spoken.

I had grown daring in these days, and I might go with her, so I thought, to the little town by the Falls. Surely there would be none to dispute my right save Miss Carew herself, and it was yet for her to say.

I suggested to Osseo that we travel faster, and he obeyed without question. It was a part of this man's nature to fulfil the wishes of a friend and never ask the reason why.

The way led now through the woods, and then through little stretches of open. Man, even on the south side of the river, had yet made but little mark upon the forest, and for the present we saw none at all. It was the wilderness as God had left it. I swept the circle of my vision, but saw the smoke of no chimney—only the black rim of the forest; heard nothing but the chattering of the squirrels in the oaks and the fall of the acorns.

Osseo stopped suddenly, gazed intently at the earth, and when he looked up again his face was full of gravity.

"Lee," he said, "the warriors have passed."

I followed his pointing finger and beheld the footsteps. I doubted not that they were those of Hoyoquim, a man whom I knew well, and whose valour and skill I respected. A sudden great dread seized me, and when Osseo said, "It is well to hasten," I felt the full truth of his words. This was yet no man's land, and there was safety only within a circle of armed hands.

"A white lady and three men have passed on

ahead," I said to Osseo. "Think you that their journey will be untroubled?"

"Manito alone knows," he said, and even as he spoke a horse, saddled and bridled, but riderless, galloped ahead of us through the woods, his eyes wild with terror, and foam on his flanks.

"Manito knows, and he has spoken his will," said Osseo.

The fear in my heart leaped up again, and I rushed forward at utmost speed. I did not think until days later that Osseo made no effort to restrain me after his cautious fashion when he feared an ambush—he knew even then that such danger had passed for us.

We reached the darkest shadow of the forest, and there we beheld the sight of which my fears had warned me, and which even before my eyes looked upon it I felt doomed to see. The three men lay dead under the trees, smitten down by an unseen foe, but the girl was gone, vanished, no more trace of her left than if made of thin air she had melted away before a wind.

Overpowered, I put my face in my hands and groaned, and yet it was but such a tragedy as this land had seen a thousand times before. Abrupt it might be, but not more so than many others.

"Hoyoquim and the Wyandots passed here," said Osseo.

"Which way do their footsteps lead?" I asked.

"To the river. They have crossed it now, and taking the white girl as their prisoner, go back with the other warriors to meet the white general."

I confess that this event was like a sudden blow. I had long since become hardened in a measure to the news of women captured and men slain. It was the wilderness road that we were compelled to tread, and many in the West had ceased to count the price, knowing that it must be paid. But she was not of the West; hers were another land and atmosphere; she had spoken

of such things as far away and unreal; even when she witnessed the return of the captives in Danville the full truth was but the impression of the moment, and must soon grow distant and unreal again. Now she was proving in her own person what it was to tread this wilderness road. I felt a great pity for her, and it was in my mind to follow at once and bring her back if I could. Surely forest skill might be of some avail. But later thought showed that such a purpose was folly. We must go on to the Falls and spread the news there, and then my duty would call me. St. Clair was advancing, and the blow that he struck might save not Rose Carew alone, but many. Her best chance lay in his victory, and I was cool enough now to see it. One could not speak to the savages of ransom while they were preparing to meet St. Clair. It was my part, too, to contribute all I could to the weight of the arm that was to strike this blow, and we hastened to the Falls, I faintly hoping for her, Osseo saying nothing.

We found the little town in deep alarm over the forays, and our tale did not help. Mr. Carew had not yet come, Jasper was with St. Clair, and the mother was there alone. But she sent for me, and I came at once to her call. When I saw the grief in that worn, pale face, I felt that it was such as she who had most to suffer as we built up the nation in the West. She said that Rose Carew had written of me, telling about the famous woodsman whom she had met in Danville; I had saved others from the savages, and now I must save her daughter, the girl who had believed in me; surely I would do it—I could not deny her.

When she had spoken thus, she lay back and gazed at me with great eyes, to whose demand I dared not say nay. I could not refuse such an infinite grief, and yet when I came away from her presence I cursed myself and my fate because my hands were tied for the time.

"Will Lee go for the girl now?" asked Osseo, his inscrutable eyes upon me.

"How can I, Osseo, how can I?" I asked.

I was to march the next day with the detachment to join St. Clair. I had made a boast to Jasper that I would join the army. I was not my own man now, and it behooved me more than any other whom I knew to walk in the straight path, as Jasper had said. The liberty of choice was not left me.

"I shall seek her, Osseo," I replied, "but I shall seek the army first."

"Lee is right," said Osseo. "He has promised that he will fight beside the Long Knives, and he can not break his word. Moreover, the white army goes where Lee would go."

We left an hour later, hurrying away, because I was not willing to look again into the face of that poor invalid, or to have her know while I was there that I was not hastening at once for her daughter. I received permission from our captain to go on before as a scout, and with Osseo by my side I plunged into the Northwestern forest, speeding through the deep woods, now burning in the full glory of autumn colours, and thinking of Rose Carew and her fate. What a blow it must be to the ambition of her father!

CHAPTER IV

THE GENERAL-WHO-NEVER-WALKS

FIVE days and nights we travelled through the forest, and while I still thought of Rose Carew I also thought of what awaited me in the camp of St. Clair. Jasper's threats had scarcely been veiled, and I knew, too, that I had aroused in him a feeling of jealousy—I laughed to myself, though it was a bitter laugh, to think how little was the cause. I was the last man in the world of whom he should feel jealous. But Osseo spoke words of comfort. The maid, beyond a doubt, had been taken to the Miami town on the Wabash, and there the army was marching. I reflected upon what he said, and saw new reasons why I should stay with St. Clair. Perhaps we were advancing to certain rescue.

Osseo, as we neared our destination, led the way. Once I turned to him and asked:

"Are you sure that you are taking the right path?"

"Yes," he answered. "I lead you straight toward the General-who-never-walks."

"To the General-who-never-walks?" I said, mystified.

"Yes," repeated Osseo, "the old, sick, white chief, who comes on the shoulders of his men; the one who builds his fires in the forest that all his enemies may see where he goes."

Such was his term for General St. Clair, who led our army against the great confederation of the Northwestern tribes. Now that he was so near, I thrilled

with strong emotion. Yet I refused to turn back. I felt a strange, stubborn pride, and it would not permit me.

Early on the morning of the sixth day Osseo pointed toward the sunrise. A thin dark line dividing the heavens showed there distinctly against the red and gold.

"The smoke from a camp fire; it must be the army of General St. Clair," I said.

He nodded.

We hastened on now, and soon reached the outposts, finding that, in truth, it was St. Clair's army which lay before us.

A soldier levelled his gun at Osseo and was about to pull the trigger, but I knocked his hand away in time.

"Don't you see that it's a friend?" I cried. "'Tis Osseo, the smartest Indian in all the Northwestern Territory."

Then I introduced myself to the captain of the pickets, a self-contained man of middle age.

"Lee! John Lee?" he said; "I have heard the name. You volunteered to serve us as a scout?"

"So I did," I said, "and I have information."

He asked us to sit by one of the camp fires, where breakfast would be given to us, and he would report meanwhile our arrival to St. Clair. We obeyed, and while we were there Winchester came to us, giving my hand the warm grip of friendship, and telling us that his business as a trader had kept him with the army. But the captain—Hardy was his name—returned in an hour, saying that General St. Clair wished to see me.

Then he led the way. I liked his manner and his trim appearance, and I knew at once that he was an old Continental officer. He had the military walk and rigidity of figure never cultivated by our Western people. I could not speak so well of his men. The scouts,

in truth, were fitted for their work, being alert fellows without pretence. Some of them I knew, such as Ben Strong, Dick Bates, and old Joe Grimes, the guide, a short, thick, bandy-legged man of immense strength and endurance, who considered all soldiers fools, and despised all governments as a useless tyranny.

I shook hands with my friends and looked again at the soldiers. It was certain that these were not men who knew the wilderness road; the ways of the forest were strange to them. I remembered the type. Their faces showed a lack of healthy colour; they were white in the cheeks and black under the eyes, and their muscles were loose and flabby, being, in fact, but sodden lumps, drawn from the vilest drinking taverns and brothels of our great Eastern towns and sent into this far wilderness to fight the wariest and most enduring of all foes, the Northwestern Indians. In truth, our President could then find no other, as we were rebuilding a country exhausted by the long years of the Revolutionary struggle. I felt both pity and contempt for these men as I looked upon them, some even trembling for the want of that rum with which they used to soak themselves in the cities.

Captain Hardy saw my attentive look and smiled in a deprecatory way.

"They will be fit in time," he said. "We are training them."

Osseo, whose watchful eyes followed mine, said in a low voice, "Rotten like a tree that has lost its roots." The savage's look expressed contempt only, and with this contrast before me I could not deny a favourite contention of his, that the red was the superior race. Beside me stood the Indian, a perfect specimen of manhood, the bronze of his skin without a splotch, his eyes as clear as the waters of a brook, his muscles as elastic and hard as hickory, all the strength and all the virtues of the primitive man in his brain and heart; and be-

fore me this rum-sodden lot, whose rotting flesh was ready to fall from their bones, and whose dim eyes gazed only in a vague wonder and distrust at the mighty forest in which they were lost. Most truly the breath of the wilderness is sometimes the breath of God.

"The camp is near to good water, I hope," I replied, speaking on the impulse of the moment, "and suitable for defence too. The general has thrown out scouts, has he not?"

Captain Hardy turned a keen look upon me.

"General St. Clair might resent such questions," he responded, "and so might I, one of his officers; but I do not, knowing that they are suggested by a good motive. The precautions of which you speak have been taken—at least part of them."

A look of depression appeared upon his face, and he was silent as we approached the main camp. I did not see, despite his assertion, the evidence of a vigilant watch, needed in such a country. Some sentinels were about, and the borderers, more of their own volition than by order, maintained a constant search through the woods for a foe, but that was all; otherwise the army felt itself secure in its numbers and strength. But the camp, it should be admitted, was selected with good judgment, lying on both sides of a clear creek, in an open space, where the forest was at least a quarter of a mile from any of the tents.

"That is General St. Clair's marquee," said Captain Hardy, pointing to the largest of them all. "He is not an altogether well man, and I ask you to be patient."

I made no promise, reserving to myself my birthright of independence. We approached the general's tent slowly, Osseo and I meanwhile still examining the army to the best of our opportunity. I judged that it numbered seventeen or eighteen hundred men, wholly from the East, except some companies of sunburned Kentuckians—the border contribution—who in their

deerskins or home-made jeans formed a contrast to the pallid Easterners in faded uniforms. Numbers of the soldiers were playing cards on fallen logs, and others slouched about without aim or purpose, which I take to be the mark of an idle mind. I saw also at least a dozen buxom women, strapping wenches, evidently the wives of corporals or sergeants, and probably better men than their husbands.

A sentinel, musket on shoulder, watched at the entrance to the general's marquee, but he stepped aside when Captain Hardy told who we were, and we entered.

It was a large tent, and on a litter in the corner lay a man of near sixty, with high-coloured, smooth-shaven face. He wore a fine American uniform, with a great puff of orange ribbon at the throat. His hair was drawn in a knot behind and tied with ribbon. An attendant was replacing the bandages upon a much-swollen foot.

It was the face of a brave, choleric, and headstrong man, with both the virtues and the vices of the race from which he sprang. General St. Clair was not an American, either by birth or breeding—only by adoption—although it must be said that he was an honourable soldier who had done us good service in the Revolutionary War, though always the cocksureness of his race clung to him, inherited like the gout from which he was now suffering.

I gave him the proper military salute, and he looked me slowly over, as if he would estimate my temper and worth.

"Are you the scout Lee?" he asked.

"I am a hunter primarily, and a scout secondarily," I replied.

"Your salute and your attitude are both military; these things are the result of training."

"It may be that I have served, sir."

"Where and when, pray?"

"That, General St. Clair, you must permit me to keep as my secret."

Additional colour flushed into his red face, but he retained control of himself and said:

"You are not a member of my immediate command, sir; if you were, I might compel another tone; but the matter may pass, and we will to the business in hand. Your name is not unknown to me, Mr. Lee, but I have no acquaintance with the savage who accompanies you."

"This, General St. Clair," I said, "is Osseo, an Indian, the loyal friend of the whites, and the best woodsman on the face of the earth."

The general nodded slightly. Osseo's salute was full of pride and haughtiness. His bearing was that of a man who acknowledged no superior and few equals, but he spoke no word, waiting in silence for me to say all that was needed.

"What do you know of the Indians whom we are sent against, Mr. Lee?" asked the general.

"They are gathering in great force on the Wabash and Miami Rivers," I replied. "All the Northwestern tribes are coming—Wyandots, Miamis, Shawnees, Ottawas, Sacs, Foxes, Pottawatomies, and some even from the shores of Superior, armed with bows and arrows. Little Turtle, Blue Jacket, Black Eagle, and the renegades Girty and Blackstaffe lead them."

"Be it so," said the general. "Let them gather and form one band. It will be easier to strike off one head than many."

"But, general," I could not refrain from saying, "these savages are bold and most dangerous. Caution is needed."

"Yes, caution is needed," he replied with satirical emphasis, "more perhaps than advice. Let it suffice you, Mr. Lee, that I am already taking all the necessary measures."

I bowed, and he added in a kindlier tone:

"I am glad that you stay with us, Mr. Lee, and glad to have the Indian too. This is a difficult business, I will admit, and we need men who know this accursed wilderness. I prefer war in the more open country of the East; but that is neither here nor there. How far over yonder does this forest extend?"

He waved his hand toward the Northwest.

"To my knowledge no man has ever reached the end of it yet," I replied.

He uttered an oath, but it was not due to impatience at my answer; merely to an extra twinge in his gouty foot.

"I suppose you think, Mr. Lee," he said, and he smiled as he said it, "that gout is the last thing a true forester ought to have."

"I never heard of one who had it," I replied.

"Which is only another way of saying that I am no forester."

I was silent, but he did not seem to be offended, and, if I may be pardoned for saying it, I did not care greatly about his state of mind. There was in truth something most startlingly incongruous in the spectacle of a gouty old general, carried on a litter through an unbroken forest, to fight Indians. But on the whole, though testy when the gout was lively, he was a gentleman, and I gave him willingly all the information at my command, describing the various tribes in the league against us, their characteristics, their probable numbers, and the quality of their leaders. Osseo supplemented my story with other details, but never for a moment relaxed his dignity. Then the general thanked us both with much courtesy, and bidding him good-day, we went from his tent into the camp. The first man whom we met was Captain Hardy.

"Mr. Lee," he said, "there is an officer of your name in our army who has heard of your arrival and

wishes to see you. I inferred from what he said that he was some kind of a relation of yours."

These words, so lightly uttered by this unsuspecting and good-hearted captain, sent all the blood in a rush to my head. I did not doubt that Jasper, since he had spoken openly of our kinship, meant to betray me. The strange feeling of jealousy that he seemed to harbour—and again I said with so slight a cause—was urging him on. Well, let him do it, if he chose. It was an emergency that I must face sooner or later, and I hardened my heart. Behold, he was here now with his lank figure, thin face, and saturnine smile, ready to keep the threat made in Danville. Some people thought that the ways of my cousin, Jasper Lee, were of the best mode and fashion, but others did not like them, and among such was I.

"We meet again, Cousin John," he said, "and I warned you not to come."

"The nature of a warning depends upon the one who warns," I replied.

"You will find that I keep my promises."

I said nothing.

"And perhaps they ought to hear about you," he added, with his malicious smile.

Whether he felt deep grief for Rose Carew, and surely he must have felt it, and when or how he had heard of her capture I knew not, but he did not speak of it then nor until long afterward.

I turned my back upon him. Captain Hardy was regarding us with a look of surprise. This most certainly was not an affectionate greeting by cousins, but he was too well bred to say anything. I told him that Osseo and I would sit again by one of the fires and rest, and he made no opposition.

As we sat there and refreshed ourselves I noticed again the situation of the camp, the flabby and sullen soldiers, and the forest. It seemed to me that the au-

tumn had advanced greatly in the last few days. The foliage blazed with intense colours in the sunshine. Afar a fine haze hung in the air, which was so pure that the lightest wind was instinct with strength and life. But the soldiers lounging near me found no beauty in it. I heard many words of discontent. Perhaps they were lamenting the gin and rum in the taverns of New York and Philadelphia. Farther on a dozen Kentuckians in fringed hunting shirts were declaiming against the military discipline of General St. Clair, a rule irksome and offensive to all borderers. The conditions in this camp, as I well knew from my brief inspection, were like the meeting of fire and tow, but perhaps the gouty general in his litter saw only through military glasses, which most seldom reveal all the phases of an affair. My mind reverted from these matters to my cousin, and I was sure now, as I had supposed, that he had much influence in St. Clair's army.

Osseo seemed to divine that trouble rested upon my mind, and, with the instinctive delicacy always shown by him, asked no questions, remaining in complete silence. We sat there by the fire a long time enjoying the luxury of rest after an arduous journey.

I was aroused from my thoughts by loud laughter, followed by loud talking, both proceeding from a group of officers gathered at the centre of the camp. The words were made indistinct by the distance, but I saw the men looking toward me as they laughed, and my cousin was among them. It was my fancy, perhaps, but I detected the sneer in both laugh and speech, and I was sure the old tale was being told again. They walked near me presently, led by Jasper, and still laughing—that is, part of them; some were silent and grave, and most evidently their glances rested upon me as if they were examining a rare animal just brought into captivity. I gave them no notice save once to meet the look of my cousin with a gaze into which I tried

to put all the dislike and contempt that I felt, in which I may have succeeded, as he dropped his eyes, though laughing louder than before.

These things could not escape the notice of Osseo, and with his acute perceptions he must have made some guess at their meaning, but his manner did not change, and he spoke only once.

"Lee will stay with the soldiers, will he not?" he asked.

"Such is my intent," I answered.

"Then I too will stay," he said. "Where Lee goes Osseo goes too."

Deep in my soul I thanked him for his confidence, but I said nothing. We arose after awhile and strolled through the camp, noting the signs of discontent and confusion. Nearly all the troops were sullen—the Eastern soldiers, who constituted the great bulk of the army, because they were underpaid and engaged in a service of which they knew nothing; and the Kentuckians because they revolted at the methods of the old Continental general, believing that encroachments were made upon their independence. As far as they were concerned a mutiny seemed perilously near, and my sympathies were divided, knowing so well the strength that was in the contention of both borderer and Continental; it was merely a difference in the point of view, but that difference was very wide.

Some one tapped me on the shoulder. It was Captain Hardy.

"General St. Clair would like to see you in his tent again," he said. The captain's manner had changed; it was no longer genial, but cold and reserved, yet not actively hostile. He had beyond a doubt heard Jasper Lee's tale, but I was equally sure that he reserved his opinion.

"I am willing to go to the general at once," I said, "but I should like to take Osseo with me."

"I know of no objection," he replied.

He led the way, and once more we were in the commander in chief's tent. General St. Clair, merely irritable before, was now distinctly suspicious. The look that he gave me was even longer and more critical than the one that he had bestowed upon me when I was first in his presence. There was something, too, in his gaze that made my face flush and every combative instinct in me rise.

"I have had news of you since morning, Mr. Lee," he said dryly, "which makes me change somewhat my opinion of you—that is, if it be true."

"I presume that your news comes from my cousin, Mr. Lee."

"You are correct in your surmise; it comes from Captain Jasper Lee. I can not on the whole call him a very cousinly cousin, but perhaps he was right in telling me this; at least I should know it, since I intended to proceed to some extent upon the strength of the information that you gave me this morning. Captain Lee said to me that you were drummed out of the Continental army for treason, and that you fled shortly afterward to this Western wilderness to hide your face from those who knew you. Is it true, Mr. Lee, that you were drummed out of the Continental army for treason?"

His gaze as he asked me this question was keen and curious, and in spite of myself I felt the blood rise to my face. But the emotion lasted only a moment.

"Such was the charge," I replied steadily.

"You of course deny the truth of that charge."

"Do not all men declared guilty of a crime, General St. Clair, claim their innocence?"

"Then you admit that you were guilty?"

"I have not said so."

He looked at me in doubt and perplexity.

"But surely there were extenuating circumstances,"

he continued. "You were only a boy then; perhaps it was some rash act, done under hot impulse?"

"It is true that I was a boy then," I replied, "but I knew perfectly well what was and what was not treason."

He swore an impatient oath—an oath that did not have its origin in his gouty foot.

"Mr. Lee," he continued, "you are a strange man. When this charge is brought against you, you neither affirm nor deny. How can I trust you in the face of such a thing? If you were a traitor then, it is quite likely that you are a traitor now. There are white renegades among the Indians—Girty and Blackstaffe and others; how do I know that you are not such yourself, and that you are not seeking to lead us into a trap?"

"You do not know it, General St. Clair," I replied, and I said it with pride—the opening of old wounds is not pleasant, and it incites one to anger.

"And yet, so I hear, you have served the border well," he said. "That is in your favour, and a man may commit a wrong act and be sorry for it. Probably poor Arnold—I say poor Arnold purposely—has repented ten thousand times of his own treason. Mr. Lee, I am absolutely sure that you were a rash and foolish boy carried away by angry impulses. You thought that a wrong had been done you, and you rushed into folly."

"It is not so," I replied stubbornly.

"I repeat that it is so," he said in a loud and choleric tone. "Do not dare to contradict me, sir; I am the commander in chief of this army. I insist that you were a thoughtless boy, who, smarting under some rank injustice, did a thoughtless deed. Now, listen, sir. You and your Indian friend can have the liberty of this camp, but you will be watched, closely watched—I can do nothing else under such circumstances—and perhaps you will have a chance to redeem yourself upon the bat-

tlefield. By God, sir, if I were in your place I should jump at the opportunity!"

"I shall stay, general," I replied quite calmly—to stay seemed best to me—"and I thank you for your consideration."

Then we left the tent and walked through the camp, intending to sit by one of the fires on the outskirts. The officers whom we passed turned their backs on me. Captain Hardy, who had been with us in the tent, went away silently. I had not understood until then, even after so many years, how bitter it would be, and I sank down by the fire in a fit of deep depression.

CHAPTER V

A GENTLEMAN IN RED

THE skies took the gray hue of my own mind. The brilliant foliage of Indian summer was dropping from the trees, and the dying leaves rustled as they fell. I repeated to myself that all the years since then had not softened the bitterness of exposure. And yet I had not really sought to hide. I had stayed in the forest because I loved it, and I had borne my own name because I was proud of it—the name John Lee. No one could truthfully say that I had sought a disguise.

I felt a light hand upon my shoulder. It was Osseo. He had been sitting beside me in silence for more than an hour. When I looked around he rose to his feet, and never had I seen him look taller and more impressive. He pointed to the northwest, where the forest stretched away a thousand miles.

"Come, my brother," he said. "Our home is there."

The Indian's eyes were flashing. I think it was the first time that I had seen him show emotion.

"Come," he continued. "Lee is accused of a crime by those of his own race, and he does not deny it. Osseo will never believe that he did it, but even if he was a traitor to his race, as the Long Knives have said, it does not change my heart. Come! all the wilderness is ours; we know it and we do not fear it. We may go where we choose."

He swept with his arm the whole semicircle of the west as he stood before me, his mighty chest heaving

and his eyes still glittering. The spirit in me again leaped into life as I looked at him and listened to his words. In truth, Osseo was a gentleman, a gentleman in red, the finest gentleman I ever met. His invitation was most tempting, too. He spoke the truth when he said that we knew the forest and did not fear its shadows; it had many joys for those who were able to tread the wilderness road. But I shook my head at last. I could not go when I was on trial.

"No, Osseo," I said; "God knows that I thank you for many things, but I can not leave this army now. I must stay with it until it meets the tribes."

This, too, despite the danger of Rose Carew and the wan face of that woman in Kentucky who had put her faith in me.

"If Lee does not go I do not go either," he said quietly, and sat down again by my side, resuming his silence, his face once more impassive, the man motionless, as if he were a block of reddish-brown marble. I did not thank him, feeling the uselessness of words in such a case, and knowing, too, that he would not wish them, but he had lifted me from the depths of depression. Nor was he my only friend. It happens sometimes that we do not learn in what esteem we are held by those who know us best until we fall into ill repute with the majority. The old scouts and borderers in this camp whose opinion I respected, and with most of whom I had shared dangers, were not backward in showing their faith.

Old Joe Grimes was the first to seek me. Old Joe was not handsome to look upon; in truth, he was so ugly that his appearance was humorous, being as broad as he was long, with features devoid of system or arrangement. But he was nearly as skilful in the woods as Osseo, and a more honest man in intent wind and hail never beat upon. Now he came to me and extended his huge hand as a sign of friendship, saying:

"I don't believe a word of the durned yarn, John. You might as well whistle jigs to a milestone as tell me it's true. I can't forgit how you helped beat off the Shawnees that time they come against my cabin, and helped save the old woman and the gals from the red rascals. Put 'er thar, John."

And I put my hand inside his, receiving a grip that would have made a bear wince. "It's some lie of these durned soldiers," he said. "Guv'mints are always doin' such things. I don't believe in guv'mints nohow. They're slower'n molasses anyway, and so far as we of the West are concerned, we are just children in the house of a stepmother."

And the others came, too, with word or act of friendship—Dick Bates, Ben Strong, Sam Peabody, Swiftfoot Tom Houck, the fastest runner in the West, and all the others who knew me. Their manner strengthened my resolve to remain with General St. Clair's army while the expedition lasted. This, I gathered from the conversation about me, could not be much longer. The general intended to march immediately against the Miami towns on the Wabash, sweeping out of his way such bands as sought to impede him, and the necessity of speedy action was apparent, as winter, which in our Northwestern woods is often a bitter winter indeed, would soon be at hand. I saw about me all the signs of early cold weather. The north wind which was blowing that morning had an unusually keen edge. The leaves were beginning to lose some of their vivid tints and curl up at the edges. They were falling in showers, too, before the blast.

Many of the raw Eastern soldiers shivered and hovered more closely around the camp fires, casting anxious glances at the unbroken forest, which curved about them. I fancy that this seemed a strange campaign to them, so far from cultivated land and the homes of men. Even the two little companies of regular troops,

disciplined, steady fellows, were not free from the sombre influence. It was unknown ground to them; they had learned none of the secrets of the wilderness, and everywhere they found it strange and gloomy.

"There will be snow soon," said Osseo, speaking at last, "and the march will be hard for the Long Knives."

"Yes, Osseo," I replied, "and this is not the place for the drilled and stiff soldier of the old country. If we could only trade them all for half their number of good foresters!"

"The General-who-rides-on-the-shoulders-of-his-men does not think so," he replied.

I could not discern whether there was the intent of irony in his speech, but such was its effect upon me.

Twenty Indians were gathered around a fire near by, talking in low tones in their own language. They were friendly Chickasaws, warriors from the far South, whom General St. Clair had brought with him as scouts and skirmishers. Osseo watched them for awhile with a contemplative eye, but did not speak. He rose presently, and without explanation entered the woods.

CHAPTER VI

A FOREST COUNCIL

It was about noon when Osseo went into the forest, and I ate dinner with the scouts, still uncertain what to do next, though resolved to stay with the army and await the issue, hoping too that a successful battle would lead to a speedy rescue of Rose Carew.

I had seen my true kind again after many years, and though I had come in repellent guise to a harsh welcome, it was only to verify what the presence of Rose Carew in Kentucky had told me already. I could not change my nature, nor the character formed in all the years preceding manhood, and the honest and rough men with whom I now sat, though good friends, were of another breed. I had long prided myself on my forest skill, but all at once it seemed a little thing to the great world with which this army had again brought me in touch. Then I was ashamed of such thoughts, when I looked around at the brown hunters who refused to believe any ill of me.

I inquired what course the army would take. It seemed to me that we should have been on the march since dawn, but I learned that no movement would be made until the next day, because of trouble with some of the militia or raw troops. General St. Clair was now unable to leave his tent, owing to a violent attack of gout aggravated by worry; and General Butler and Colonel Sargent, his chief assistants, were seeking to overcome the difficulties, though the wilderness was

a blank to them, and they sought none who could tell them its ways.

The gray and chilly day did not improve, nor did the troubled camp. Extremes met here—the stiff military discipline of the East and the absolute independence of the Western forester; while the honest but incompetent old general, whose duty it was to reconcile them, writhed with a swollen foot on his couch.

Osseo returned to the camp about dusk and sat down beside me in front of one of the fires, which were now a necessity, owing to the increasing cold. I handed him a piece of venison, and he ate it in silence. I, too, held my peace, knowing that he would speak in his own good time, and that when he did so speak it would be to much purpose.

"Indian sign," he said at last. "Plenty of it."

"Where, Osseo?" I asked.

"All around," he replied. "Before, behind, on both sides. Wyandots and Miamis on right, Ottawas and Shawnees on left. General-who-never-walks should be General-who-never-sleeps. Forest full of danger—dangers as thick as those."

He pointed toward the dying leaves, which were falling to the earth in showers before the keen north wind.

"I see, Osseo," I replied, and I felt a deep sadness as I spoke, "but I am in no position to give advice to General St. Clair. God knows that no man ever needed it more than he!"

I was thinking then of the great hopes that rested upon St. Clair's army: a whole people expected now an end to the cruelties that had so long ravaged the border; and there too was the rescue of Rose Carew which this force ought to further.

Osseo remained, after his brief report, in silence, pondering upon I knew not what. Winchester joined us presently. He, too, had heard my cousin's tale about

me, and his manner of handling it was according to his nature. "It's an infernal lie, Lee!" he said. "I would not believe it if you yourself were to swear to me that it is true, and I do not want to hear a word about the matter." Then he took his seat beside us in front of the coals and talked of other things. His mind moved slowly as a rule, but it moved in right channels.

Osseo and I bade Winchester good-night shortly after dusk, and taking our rifles, prepared to leave the camp. We could do as we chose in this particular, ours being the loose duty of scouts, which means freedom in the West. In truth, the scouts made their movements according to their own judgment. All their reconnoitring seemed voluntary. General St. Clair apparently was stupefied by the forest, which lay upon him like a wet cloth, and did not fill the woods with his spies.

Most of the men were asleep. Osseo looked at them a moment or two and then said:

"Only a fool sleeps without fear in the forest."

We reached the fringe of the camp, and were about to pass the sentinel there, but he stopped us.

"You can not pass," he said.

"We are scouts; we intend to examine the woods for Indian signs," I said in some surprise.

"The Indian may go, but not you, Mr. Lee," replied the man.

"Why?" I asked. His tone seemed to me to smack of insolence.

"Orders of Captain Lee, the officer of the guard."

Captain Lee himself appeared a moment later, and explained in his usual suave manner.

"We are forced to distrust you, my gentle cousin," he said. "Remembering what you were once, we fear that you are the same to-day. Now, I am quite sure that if you go into the forest there you go merely to confer with the Indians our enemies."

"Jasper Lee," I replied, "you know that you lie!"

He flushed and raised his hand as if he would strike me, but in a moment recovered himself—he knew better than to deal me a blow—and then said, quite coldly:

"Have it as you please; I can afford to take any sort of abuse from you. You are too far below me for me to answer you."

"Perhaps," I said, stung somewhat by his taunt, "when you were dispensing news about me to the camp to-day, you did not tell how much you had profited by my condemnation. My outlawry and disappearance have enabled you to enjoy what were mine."

"And rightly so," he replied with some heat. "You were the traitor, not I."

"Be it as you say," I continued; "I warn you not to interfere with me. As you see, I have friends here, and if a contest should come between us I might not be the one to suffer the more. Still I do not seek it."

He looked at me wonderingly, as if fearing that I possessed some hidden weapon, and then he turned carelessly to the sentinel.

"Let him pass," he said.

Osseo and I left the camp behind us and entered the forest. We stood a few moments in the shade of a great oak tree, and looked back at the smouldering fires. Then we proceeded a little farther, and turning again, saw no light behind us. The wilderness had received the army and hidden it as it could have hidden one a hundred times larger. Around us stretched the loneliness of desolation, and a silence broken only by the rustle of the dying leaves as they fell. We renewed our journey and passed a herd of deer feeding quietly in a little open space.

"The Indian has not been here, or the deer would not be so quiet," said Osseo.

We turned toward the left, and after ten minutes' walking heard the faint hoot of an owl to the south-

ward. It was answered from another point perhaps a mile distant. Clearly the savages were alert if General St. Clair was not.

"Wyandots," said Osseo. "They have passed this way."

He pointed to faint traces on the earth, visible in the moonlight.

I suggested to him that we pursue the band and perhaps we could steal near enough to hear their talk, his assent being given at once. So we followed the trail in the moonlight through the forest, over hills and across little brooks and through thickets, but never losing it for a moment. Engaged upon this intent and delicate business, all my old sanguine feelings returned I was again in the woods, free to go where I chose; the world was mine, and the most trusty of all comrades was by my side.

Soon we beheld a subdued light in the forest, as if those who kindled it did not wish to be seen afar. Lying down among the bushes and creeping with hand and knee, we drew near enough to discern about twenty warriors sitting in a glen and talking with great earnestness. Among them were two of our Chickasaw scouts—not prisoners, but most evidently on good terms with our inveterate enemies.

The little circle of Indians, sitting there in the forest and holding such grave converse, gave the impression of dignity. They were mostly men of importance, as I could tell by their dress, which in every instance was elaborate and rich according to the Indian ideas. Their moccasins were of the finest and neatest-fitting deerskin, and as they sat the seamless soles were turned up to the fire. Their leggings were of blue or red cloth, purchased at the British forts, decorated around the bottom and up one side with a border of beads, and trimmed in two or three cases with tiny bells. Their hunting shirts also were made of blue or red broadcloth

or fine, tanned deerskin, the bottom and front covered with an embroidery of many-coloured beads, the fringe of the shirt falling to the knee.

Each carried around him, with all the gravity and grace of a Roman senator wearing the toga, a blanket of blue or red or yellow, made of the finest broadcloth, and about two yards square. Two or three wore head-dresses after the fashion of the Iroquois, which consisted of a close-fitting splint band with a cross band curving over the top, from which hung a cluster of feathers, while another and larger feather was set in the centre of the head-dress and waved defiantly aloft. This was the war plume. The weapons in every case were a rifle, tomahawk, and knife.

"War chiefs in council," whispered Osseo. "When they talk thus together there will soon be wailing in the settler's cabin."

I knew full well the truth of his words, but I did not withhold admiration from the circle that made the brilliant and impressive picture before me. Theirs was truly a life in all its wildness and freedom that many a man might covet. We crept a little nearer, but still we could not understand what they were saying, and we dared not attempt a further approach, as Indian ears are so cunning that, near by, no skill may deceive them. The Wyandot chief Hoyoquim, whom I recognised, had been talking, but at this moment the warrior next to him, a man of great age, but still strong and erect, arose and began to make a formal address after the Indian custom, speaking with much eloquence, a quality not at all rare among the tribes. As he raised his voice we could hear his words.

He was an Iroquois named Haqua, and he told of the fate that befell the Six Nations because they did not unite against the white invaders. He urged the Western tribes to avoid a similar mistake, speaking with a forest eloquence that soon drew murmurs of approval.

"The warriors of the West are brave," said Haqua in conclusion, "and they are many. They have come even from the far shores of the greatest lake, and their most famous chiefs lead them. Let none go home until we strike and destroy the army that the General-who-never-walks leads through the forest. Then the white man will be sent beyond the Ohio, and he will not dare to come again into the land which you have said with your rifle and tomahawk is yours and shall remain yours. *Hero koué.*"

When he uttered his guttural cry "*Hero koué,*" which means, in the Iroquois, "This is the end," the murmur of approval became a subdued cry, it being evident that there was but one mind among them all. Hoyoquim next sprang to his feet, and made a fiery speech, in which he seconded all that the old Iroquois had said, and two others also spoke.

The council was now over and the chiefs rose. We, too, turned away, and our self-chosen expedition lasted throughout the night, taking us in a wide circuit around the camp. Everywhere we found Indian signs. The army of General St. Clair advanced through many dangers. We met Joe Grimes and Dick Bates near morning, and they made the same report. Old Joe shook his head ominously.

"I don't like it, Lee—I don't like it," he said, "We could tell General St. Clair that the warriors are gathering, but you might as well sing psalms to a dead horse. He'll think we're just stuffing mush in his ears."

I feared that he was right, but, right or wrong, we took our way back to the army at rise of sun, intending to report what we had seen.

The camp presented a cheerful aspect in the early morning light, the blaze of many fires rising in the crisp, frosty air. The men were preparing to make an early start, and for once they showed zeal.

The officer in charge of the guard was Captain

Hardy, and he did not object when I told him that I wished to see General St. Clair, being the bearer of important information. The general, he said, was up betimes from his bed, and was in a fairly good humour, his swollen foot having been relatively kind to him the night before. Captain Hardy's bearing toward me was neither hostile nor friendly, its general note being that of one who reserved his decision for a future which should be determined by my conduct. I cared much for the good opinion of this officer, as his frank, honest manner was so evidently the index of a fine nature, and silently I thanked him for withholding his verdict.

General St. Clair was in his tent, eating his breakfast, which was served by an orderly, and with him were his second in command, Major-General Richard Butler, whose yellow face and pinched features told of illness; his adjutant general, Colonel Winthrop Sargent; and my loving cousin, Captain Jasper Lee. Jasper, by one of those curious turns of his nature, welcomed me with seeming great frankness.

"General, it is my cousin, Mr. Lee," he said. "No doubt he has a busy night's work to relate."

My tale was quickly told. General St. Clair listened with surprise, which soon turned, as I saw by the expression of his face, into incredulity. He was more than half suspecting that I sought to deceive him. Jasper's sharp eyes too caught the fact, and his look soon became an imitation of the general's; but when I met my cousin's gaze I stared so steadily at him, prompted as I was by indignation and the sense of right, that his eyes fell. Nevertheless I continued my tale to the end, keeping to the straight of it, and determined that he should hear all I knew."

"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Lee," said General St. Clair when I finished, "that the forces of the savages are on all sides of us, and that you have listened to one of their war councils?"

It was certainly so, I replied, and I cited the absence of all the Chickasaws from the camp, a fact that I had noted immediately upon my return. The general sent his orderly for confirmation of my report, and the soldier soon returned with the news. General St. Clair's face clouded and his look became depressed.

"The Chickasaws no doubt have deserted us," he said, "and it is a grave defection at such a time."

"But perhaps they will return before nightfall," said Jasper insinuatingly. "They may be on only a scouting expedition. No doubt many besides my cousin have noted their absence from the camp."

"That is true," said the general more cheerfully.

Then I saw his face harden and all his stubbornness concentrate in his brow. It was idle to proffer advice to General St. Clair at that moment, however humbly, but I did it nevertheless, calling attention to the numbers and warlike ardour of the Northwestern warriors and our own isolated position in the huge forest. And all the time Cousin Jasper stood by, with his ironic face, but not saying a word. General Butler and Colonel Sargent occasionally made a comment, though they took no active part.

"I don't wish to wrong you, Mr. Lee," General St. Clair finally said, "and so I again give you the benefit of the doubt. I thank you for your report if it should be correct. I appreciate also your anxiety for the success of the army, but be assured that I shall take all the measures necessary to win victory."

And with that I felt myself dismissed, quite sure that I had made a mistake when I came to General St. Clair with ominous news.

CHAPTER VII

THE WILDERNESS ROAD

THE army took up its march, advancing slowly and with pain. General St. Clair was borne upon a litter carried by four men, who were changed at intervals. He swore profusely, and so did his army. The scouts went ahead, and after them came the axemen, as it was necessary to cut a way through the forest for the wagons and the artillery. Behind trod the soldiers, grumbling; the volunteers as usual complaining of their food and pay, and the militia discontented with the military yoke.

Yet the forest was a noble sight. The grayness had left the air, and the ground was dry in the sunshine. The woods on this last day of October still glowed with much of Indian summer's beauty. Beneath our feet the soil was deep, rich, and black. Game sprang up in front of us, deer rushed by, while squirrels chattered overhead on every bough. Any fool could see that it was a magnificent country worth fighting to gain or to keep. One's spirits were bound to rise with such a prospect, and mine were no exception. Osseo and I remained with the column. Although we had received such small thanks when I went to the general's tent that morning, my mind did not incline me to regret the experiment, at least for the present.

Captain Jasper Lee came up presently, riding a very fine horse. He asked me why I was not out with my rifle searching the woods for hostile Indians.

"General St. Clair did not choose to believe my nar-

rative," I answered, "and I suppose that the others take the same view of it. All of you are alike, and I do not care to make reports that nobody will listen to."

He gave me a fierce look, but I repeat that we of the West are a very free people. Moreover, I had no mind to take impertinence from him.

"Mr. Lee," he said, "you should remember that you are with us on tolerance."

"General St. Clair needs all the men whom he can get," I replied.

He did not reply, but, giving his horse a cut with the whip, rode to the head of the column.

We halted a little later for the noon rest, and when we started again General St. Clair swore with a point and vigour that I have seldom known surpassed. Sixty of the militia, taking advantage of the confusion at the dinner hour, had deserted, and were now well on their way southward and toward home. Redder than ever in the face with wrath, he instantly despatched one of our two little regular regiments in search of the deserters, against the protests of some of our officers; and, thus weakened, we continued our march toward the Indian towns on the Wabash through woods apparently as wide and pathless as the sea itself.

We heard shots late that afternoon, but it was only some of the scouts skirmishing with wandering Indians. One of our men lost his life, but an Indian was slain, and the officers seemed to think it a fair exchange. These officers, I will say, were a gallant set, brave and disciplined, but out of their element in the woods, and inclined to hold the foe too lightly. Some of the younger told me their hope of finding the savages this side of their towns, and I could only reply that our foes were evasive creatures, and quote our Western proverb, "All signs fail in dry weather," which means that in midsummer the sight of clouds does not betoken rain, and if one saw an Indian now it did not indicate an

Indian battle on the morrow; nor would it be wise to say that it did not—in truth, one could never know what the savages intended, their methods of warfare being most irregular.

Winchester was still with us, and, his turn of mind being philosophic, appeared not overmuch disturbed by his situation. He had a fine way of taking matters as they came, and concerned himself a great deal with the present, very little with the future.

"I scarce know what I ought to do, Lee," he said to me. "My nation is at peace with these savages, and it is my business to trade for their furs. Luckily, I have done so well that I intended in any event to return to England in the spring. I expected to leave your army and go to Detroit, but I think that I shall postpone that trip until after the battle."

While the army crept through the dark woods, Osseo said to me one day: "I go upon an errand for Lee, and perhaps I shall bring him news that he will wish to hear." I divined his meaning at once, and I replied, "Osseo, no man ever had a better friend than I have in you."

Then he slid away, his brown form blending with the brown of leaf and bush. In our ill-ordered camp he was not missed save by some of the old frontiersmen such as Joe Grimes, to whose questions I replied that he had gone to spy out the country, the excuse sufficing. I was sitting by the camp fire at dawn a few days later, when the figure of Osseo suddenly stood beside me as if he had risen like a mist from the earth. There was a light in his eyes, and I waited with patience, though with eagerness, until he should speak.

"I have seen the white maid," he said, "and she is well though not happy. I was again Nokalis of the totem Cahenhisnhonen, of the tribe of the Mohawks, of the nation of the Iroquois, and I have been to the village of the Miamis, where Hoyoquim the Wyandot took

the maid when he captured her, and where she is to be kept a close prisoner until after the fighting with the General-who-never-walks, when the Wyandot chieftain means to take her to his own village."

"How does she bear it?" I asked.

"She is brave," he replied. "What tears she had to shed she has shed, for she does not weep now, but she sits in the prison lodge, and her face is ever turned toward Kaintuckee. Hope is still in her heart, because she believes that some one will yet come to save her."

"And who is that some one, Osseo?" I asked.

"I did not get a chance to talk with the maid and tell her that I was not Nokalis the Mohawk at all, but Osseo, a friend, and so I can not say," he replied. "But I saw her and I know that she does not despair. I saw too that she was beautiful, and I know also that if Lee should risk his life for her she is worth the risk."

"You spoke truth there, Osseo!" I said to myself, and again I was tempted to leave the army, take the Indian, and seek a rescue at once. But upon cold consideration it seemed so vain a plan! With every warrior alert and watching for St. Clair, it would be impossible to enter their village. No, I must wait until St. Clair struck, hoping that the blow would serve Rose Carew as well as the nation. My mind reverted also to her father. I knew that many of his plans depended upon the success of this expedition, and while he loved his daughter—of that there was no doubt—he could not wholly forget them, even when she was in captivity. I wondered too what direction his ambition would take if we were to fail, and I was sure that it would carry him into some new channel.

Late in the afternoon following Osseo's return I heard the forest calling; in truth, it had been calling all the day, but I would not heed its voice until then; I could not now resist the feeling that my place was out there among the trees and undergrowth, looking for

our enemies, and not here in the close ranks, where I was of no more use than the merest lump of a soldier pining for his New York tavern and dose of gin. So I gave the signal to Osseo, who, while he was with the army usually waited upon my initiative, and shouldering our rifles we trickled quietly away from the column and into the dense woods. There we were quickly invisible, although we could yet hear the sound of the axes as the men cleared the road for the army and the crack of the whips as the drivers brought up the wagons.

Osseo's eyes twinkled faintly as he looked at me.

"My friend Lee would not like to be a soldier and carry only a gun," he said. "He would be a Long Knife. He wishes to be a general and swear at the men like the General-who-never-walks, and not be a soldier and have the general swear at him. My friend Lee is wise."

"You speak truth, Osseo," I replied, unable to restrain a smile at his discernment and dry comment. "I would rather be an officer any day than a private, but just now I would rather be here in the woods with you, neither master nor man, than be either."

"The General-who-never-walks," continued Osseo, "swears more every day, and also Manito has stricken him blind. Osquesont * flashes before his eyes, but he sees it not. Manito has stricken him deaf too . Annemeekee † is in his ears, but he hears it not. The tribes sharpen Dayanoaqua,‡ but the General-who-never-walks knows it not."

"It is true, Osseo," I said.

"Wabun # is whispering secrets in my ears," he replied, "and I tell them to my friend Lee."

His tone now was not only earnest but warning. Os-

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* The tomahawk.
† The thunder.
‡ The scalping knife.
# The east wind.

seo himself was fit to pronounce impressive words—a warrior over six feet high, as straight as the hickory tree, and as strong; a man of broad brow with the great width between the eyes that one often sees in the Northern Indians. He was always most scrupulous about his attire. Among the whites on the border, who are rather slovenly in dress, the same care would have been called dandyism, but with him it was merely pride and self-respect.

His blanket, partially folded across his back, and made of as fine a piece of broadcloth as I ever saw, was in colour a dark reddish brown. He wore one of the Iroquois frames over his head, and from the centre of it rose the eagle feathers, the special emblem of the Iroquois. I do not think he was an Iroquois, although he spoke their dialects perfectly, and he probably wore eagle feathers as a defiance. His deerskin hunting suit was also coloured a reddish brown, and was heavy with bead ornamentation. His rifle was silver-mounted and cost a pretty penny—I ought to know, as it was a present from me—his tomahawk had a highly polished horn handle, and the hilt of his knife was silver. In short, his dress was worthy of his figure and mien, and Osseo would have compared favourably in appearance with any of the world's great men.

"What Wabun whispers to me," he continued, "Kabibonokka * also whispers, and it roars in my ears like Baimwana,† yet the General-who-never-walks will not hear."

"Come, Osseo," I said, "let us not lament. But you and I will do the best we can."

It required no close search now to find the Indian trails. We crossed and recrossed them at every turn, mostly those of small parties, of a half-dozen warriors or so, but in two or three instances larger bands of

* The north wind. † The sound of thunder.

twenty or thirty. I saw the truth of Osseo's metaphorical assertion that every wind brought the sound of the savages sharpening the scalping knife. But another simile also occurred to my mind: our army was like a huge and unsuspecting dragon-fly, around which many fierce little spiders were cautiously weaving a web.

"How far is it to the Miami villages, Osseo?" I asked. The Miami villages were our immediate destination.

"Lee and I could reach them in the space between two morning suns," he replied, "but the General-who-never-walks will need ten."

I made a calculation based upon this report, and found that the distance was about sixty miles. Ten days was a long period for our army, which, bad now, was declining in quality, and, moreover, winter was coming apace. Men with such soft bones as our city troops could not stand the fierce cold of these Northwestern forests.

We continued our circuit around the camp, meaning to return to it about halfway between midnight and sunset, but just as we were preparing for the homeward journey we crossed a new and decidedly fresh trail. We turned aside and followed it a few hundred yards, when both Osseo and I sank to the earth as if we had done so in response to some preconcerted signal.

A little more than rifle shot in front of us was a glade with a hillock in the centre. A half-dozen warriors watched at the edges of the glade, but it was not they who drew our eyes; instead, they were fastened upon a group of men standing upon the hillock.

"The war chiefs!" said Osseo. "Even now they look at the camp of the General-who-never-walks."

A great tower of smoke rose above the trees in front of us a half mile away, marking where the army lay, and upon this smoke the eyes of the eight men who stood on the hillock were intent. It was the second time in the last few days that Osseo and I had come

upon an Indian council, but the second assembly was evidently more important than the first, and we could not now creep within hearing distance.

The chiefs were of different tribes. I recognised even at the distance Hoyoquim the Wyandot, often called Black Eagle, the captor of Rose Carew, and there too was Mechecunnaqua, or, as the whites knew him, Little Turtle, the famous war chief of the Miamis, now the head chief of the whole Northwestern Confederacy, and chiefs of the Ottawas, Pottawatomies, Delawares, Shawnees, and others, not excepting a leader of the Chippewas from the far country beyond Lake Superior. Little Turtle pointed occasionally toward the smoke of our camp fire, and so far as I could judge he was the principal speaker, as became his position at the head of the confederacy. He raised his tomahawk presently, and with it threatened the distant smoke, making the motion of a blow. All in turn did likewise. Then they stepped from the hillock and they and their guards faded away in the forest. I said to myself that the battle could not be far off, but Osseo and I returned to camp without comment to each other upon what we had seen. I did not offer a report, as I knew I was a discredited witness, but the other scouts were bringing in news of the same character, and I felt that what we had seen was not lost.

I lay down to sleep a little later, not having closed my eyes in forty-eight hours, and was soon in slumberland. The next day was gray and wintry, a slight snow falling and the cold increasing so much before night that ice formed on the little pools of water, standing here and there in the forest, and the dead leaves fell in showers. But the rotting army still dragged its slow and painful length through the dismal forest, and the second evening thereafter encamped on the eastern bank of the Wabash River, now but a baby stream fifteen or twenty yards wide, where most of the soldiers—horse,

foot, and artillery—were jammed together on a little plateau, although the militia went in camp some distance beyond the stream.

The night was wintry cold, fingers were chilled when they touched the metal of rifle or cannon, and the men shivered as they hung over the smoking fires. There had been no skirmishing between the scouts and Indian parties since morning, and the silence of desolation hung over the forest, where the leaves were still falling in showers. Never before had the army felt so lonely and so far from the haunts of men. The cold crept into the marrow of the soldiers, and the dwellers in cities looked fearfully at the solemn woods.

I had been all day, and most of the night before, in the woods seeking Indian sign—and finding plenty of it—and night being at hand, I was worn to the bone. Despite the coldness with which I was received, I made one or two additional reports to General St. Clair, which were received with but little comment, and if I needed further proof it became fully evident that he reposed much faith in his own foresight and judgment. Saying no more, I crossed the shallow river, and joined Osseo with the militia, who were in advance.

I was too tired to do scouting work that night, and, lying down near Osseo before one of the fires, I soon fell into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PHANTOM HORDE

"AWAKE, my friend; the enemy comes!"

Osseo stood beside me in the chill of early dawn, his dark eyes glowing, and every nerve and muscle taut.

I sprang to my feet and saw naught but the sentinels, heard naught but their footsteps. The great forest rimmed us round, as silent and lonely as when we lay down to sleep. The ice glittered on the river and the pools.

"The enemy coming, Osseo? I see nothing."

"There is a warrior in every bush. The ring of the tribes has closed around us. The General-who-never-walks does not believe, but Osseo knows. The end is in Manito's keeping. *Hero koué.*"

It was a solemn speech, and I no longer doubted. I grasped my rifle more tightly and saw that my powder-horn and bullet pouch were full. A thin, cold mist was rising from the snow-covered earth.

The awakening trumpet sounded, and the army rose from its slumbers. The sentinels reported that all was well. The wintry sun crept above the rim of the earth, and the same silence still reigned in the great woods. Yet the forest now spoke to me in many tongues. I longed to shout its news into the ears of the stubborn general, but I knew that he would order me in scorn from his tent. The militia began to form in ranks, and smoke rose from the growing fires.

"The enemy comes!" said Osseo again in low and thrilling tones.

A bead of fire appeared in a bush straight ahead of us, expanded and went out, just as the sharp crack of a rifle sped, echoing, through the desolate forest. A soldier, one of our Kentucky militiamen, standing nearest the trees, pitched forward upon his face, stone dead. The bullet had passed through his head. A yell—long, quavering, but full of sound, like the howling of thousands of hungry wolves—rose and then died in a whine more ferocious than its highest note. It was the war-cry of the savages, and it came from every point of the compass and all the points between. Osseo had spoken from the fulness of knowledge. The attack had begun.

The single bead of fire was followed by many others sparkling among the bushes or in the shadows of the forest, singularly vivid in the cold, still morning. The sound of the rifle shots was like the rapid cracking of a huge whip, and the echoes repeated themselves. No wind was stirring. The dead and dying leaves did not move, and the spurts of smoke rose straight upward.

Our men fell rapidly, the bullets flying fast. Some died without noise, and some cried out in surprise rather than pain when they were struck. Their comrades stood in disordered groups, bewildered by the attack, despite the warnings of the last few days, staring stupidly at the officers, who shouted opposing orders and who sought to form their ranks.

The fire of the savages increased; once again rose their war-whoop, fierce and triumphant, but the harried soldiers saw nothing. The forest was full of foes who shot with deadly aim. The beads of flame appeared and reappeared among bushes and trees, and the soldiers began to fire now at the flashes and the smoke, but still they saw no human beings save themselves. The sound of battle was in their ears, but it was only the crack of the weapons, their own cries, or the occasional war-

whoop. Dusky forms were flitting from tree to tree, but they made no sound as they passed. Our men knew not whether any of their bullets slew. They could only fire into the forest, which was wide and sent back no tales; but they saw their own dead heaping up at their feet, and the hail of bullets that cut them down was thickening fast.

Our vanguard was quickly driven over the little river and into the main army, but it did not find rest and peace there. The fire of the invisible foe swept in a ring around the entire force, and the swift bullets cut through every rank. The army was driven into a huddled mass, and its bewilderment grew as the companies were struck down by the unseen death. When the survivors were pressed together they made a better target for the savages, who crept closer and closer, firing from behind every tree and bush and log at the great yellow and blue mass of white men who stood in the open. The crackle of the rifle shots was accompanied by cries, groans, and falls.

It is a terrible thing for the soft dweller in cities to be surprised in the desolate forest by an unseen but none the less deadly foe; to see the fire and smoke of his rifle shots, but never that foe; to hear the hiss of the bullets, and to see them cutting down the disordered ranks; then the chill of fear creeps into the marrow and paralyzes the brain. Panic ran through our raw Eastern levies. It was not such fighting as this that they had come to do; they expected at least an enemy whom they could see, and whenever the war-whoop rose it was to them a true death chant.

The officers sought to restore order and organize the defence. There were men among them who might have known more, but none are braver than those officers proved themselves to be. The Indian bullets struck them down as they gave orders and threatened with the flats of their swords, but the survivors shirked no duty.

Pride and discipline kept them erect, although the storm of bullets came thicker and thicker.

I saw General St. Clair rush from his tent, believing at first that it was but a skirmish; but when he knew at last that the danger which he had despised was upon us he showed himself a brave man, walking calmly among the soldiers, upbraiding them for panic terror, and giving them an example of coolness, while the bullets of the savages pierced his own clothing. But to lead troops in battle one needs more than courage, and though the general stood in the midst of the army and encouraged it to fight, the fire of the Indians increased in volume and accuracy, and lashed our ranks through and through.

Now the soldiers began to see figures through the haze, mere glimpses of coppery faces leaping from bush to bush and gone when they fired. The clouds of smoke rising from so many rifle shots made the forest around them dimmer, and all that it contained vague and unreal.

Our cannon were firing, and the heavy roll of the discharges made a thunderous echo. The black smoke of the great guns rose and added to the dimness, but the gunners, like the riflemen, saw no target. The cannon-balls crashed in the forest, and from some other point the warriors yelled defiance. The cavalrymen sprang upon their horses and galloped into the woods, but the fire of the savages emptied the saddles and no one saw whence the bullets came. Regular troops, cannon in the centre and on their flanks, reckless of death, charged among the trees; the warriors melted away before them, and lo! no foe was there; when they were forced to fall back upon the mass of the army the Indians swarmed again on every side, their bullets striking on human bodies like the pattering of rain drops on water.

"O God," groaned a regular beside me, "if I

could only see a single enemy—something to shoot at!"

The next instant a bullet from a hidden foe cut short his hopes and his life. I loaded and fired my rifle as fast as I could, and Osseo, bent in a stooping position, sending his bullets into the woods, was by my side.

The camp was now swept by the rifle fire from every side, with the ring of the savages pressing closer and ever closer. I saw General St. Clair again, and as I looked a bullet clipped a lock of the gray hair which hung in such profusion beneath his three-cornered hat, and another pierced his coat. He continued his steady walk up and down the lines; and General Butler, our second in command, just risen from a sick-bed, did the same, each trying to preserve order on his wing and passing and repassing in grave silence. There was something tragic and pathetic in the bearing of these two old generals, both so brave and both so unfit for the work they had to do.

"A hot morning, General Butler!" said General St. Clair once as he passed.

"An exceedingly hot morning, General St. Clair," replied General Butler with the same coolness; "but I fancy that it will not last."

General St. Clair bowed courteously to indicate agreement, and walked on. This was a fine dignity on the part of two old soldiers, and I admired it duly; but not all the merits of manner removed the facts of the surprise, nor abated for one moment the fury and baffling nature of the savage attack. We were being cut down precisely as a British army under Braddock had been cut down more than thirty years before; and the great President, then in his youth, who witnessed all the horrors of Fort Duquesne, had warned St. Clair of just such another ambush. "Beware of Indian stratagem," he said. "Fill the woods with your scouts, and heed what they tell you!" But all in vain; the

headstrong general would have his way, and behold the issue!

Our gallant officers still led the charges into the woods, and the cannon boomed above the crash of the rifles, balls and grape-shot doing much damage to trees and bushes, and always the wary foe sank away like the mist; but when the charge spent itself and the soldiers returned to the main force, back the savages came again, fiercer and more deadly than ever, pouring their bullets into the huddled mass of white men who yet stood like a shining mark in the open. Our charges became fewer. The artillery horses were shot down and the screams of the wounded animals were the most fearful sounds on all that battlefield. The officers fell fast, their bravery and their epaulets marking them as special targets, the army was driven more and more toward the common centre, and the ring of smoke in which so many beads of fire sparkled grew thicker all around it. The two generals were still walking up and down the lines, calling out orders and bidding the men to fight.

General St. Clair's uniform was torn in a half dozen places by the rifle bullets, but so far as I could see he was unharmed. General Butler's arm suddenly dropped to his side, broken by a ball; but the general threw off his coat, and when one of the men put the arm in a sling he continued his calm walk, the blood from his wound falling drop by drop upon his uniform. Another bullet struck him in the side, and he fell at last, but struggled to his feet again. He could not stand, and two men, lifting him up, carried him to the middle of the camp, where he sat propped against a great heap of knapsacks, which would never be put to use again by our soldiers. General St. Clair walked on, but alone.

The disorder of the battle grew as the Indian bullets cut us down like grass; the ranks could not be kept, the cannon could not be moved, the horses being killed, the confused shouts told nothing, the increasing clouds of

smoke hid every movement; all became a horrible tumult and jumble.

Now panic and terror ran through the veins of our men. They knew not the number of the savages, but they felt their sting. The foe was a phantom host who escaped their blows, but struck back with deadly interest. There was safety in neither attack nor defence, and whichever way they faced, the bullets swept every corner of the battlefield. Our dead lay throughout our camp, dozens at first, then scores, now hundreds, and above the shouts of our men, the whoop of the savages, and the rattle of the rifle shots, rose the scream of the wounded horses. I have seen battles between civilized foes; I was at Princeton when the British came with the bayonet, and I was at Monmouth on that burning day when "Mad" Anthony led the charge, but there it was mercy for the conquered, and the cry for quarter once uttered, foes became friends. Those were the mere polish of war to this savage encounter in the wilderness, where a man once down prayed a speedy death, for otherwise the fagot and the stake were his.

The terror of the phantom host multiplied in the minds of the raw soldiers. They seemed to be fighting invisible demons, as in truth they were. They began to give way, and with shouts of horror turned to flee. The savages now ran in, and bounding here and there, struck down with war axe and tomahawk.

General Butler was still lying against the knapsacks, and as I looked he sent his last aide with an order to another part of the field. A gigantic figure, naked to the waist, sprang up before the reclining officer. It was Hoyoquim, his face streaked horribly with the war-paint and his tomahawk uplifted. I raised my rifle with involuntary motion, but I had just fired at a savage, and there was not time to reload. The next instant the tomahawk descended and clove the head of the brave general to the neck. Uttering a piercing cry of triumph, Hoyo-

quim sprang back into the bushes, and the confusion and slaughter around us increased. The crackle of the rifle firing grew louder, but the note of the cannon sank, and for the best of reasons; nearly all the gunners and cannoneers were killed. Some of the men, unused to the forest, and appalled by this battle, in which the blows of the enemy seemed as mysterious and deadly as strokes of lightning, ceased to use their weapons, and, shivering, cowered over the fires, though, had they known it, the shivering was from terror and not from cold. Others burst into the tents and drank what liquor they could find, wishing to stupefy themselves or find an artificial joy in the face of death. The officers struck them with the flats of their swords, but these men took the blows in silence or laughed stupidly. Our regular troops in this strange and terrible position showed undaunted courage, charging often with the bayonet, driving back the savages and raising them out of the bushes and grass like partridges, but when the charge spent its force in the woods the savages, as before, swarmed back, shooting down from many coverts. Every one of the regular officers was killed or wounded, but their men fought on, and once General St. Clair himself led their charge, only to get more bullets through his clothes, but to escape the death which perhaps he then coveted.

We were being forced slowly toward the forest, and when we charged back at times to scatter the cloud of Indians who hung on our rear we noticed that our dead, who lay so thickly upon the ground, were now scalped, while the yelling savages as they leaped from bush to bush brandished in triumph the horrid trophies.

A dozen Indians suddenly sprang from the thickets, and rushing forward, seized one of the cannon; all the artillerymen had been killed beside it. They began to drag it away, but the regulars recovered it with a charge which sent the warriors flying into the bushes, from

the cover of which they decimated our ranks with rifle balls. In a few moments another cannon was lost, and then retaken, but at the same expense, and now all the old scouts began to see that the courage of the regular troops and officers—boys, many of the latter were, though never did men die more bravely—was of no avail; the battle was lost beyond the hope of saving, and with it half the army, slain in that vast forest; all knew there would be no wounded, save those whom we could take away with us, and these would be but few.

Now a lone trumpet sounded the retreat. The cannon were spiked and abandoned. The way was plain; behind us lay the broad trail that our advancing army had made, and into it pressed the wild pell-mell of the fugitives, driven on by the fear of death in its most terrible form, bullets pelting the huddled and fleeing mass. Osseo and I had managed to keep together in all the turmoil, and when we turned to retreat with the others we ran toward the head of the column, where the savages had closed across the path of flight, wild with triumph and the greatest scalp-taking that their generation had known, and wishing to destroy the whole of the army as they had already destroyed half of it. The Indian coil now encircled us; but our army, some still animated by courage and some by the fear of death, drove straight along the road and at the savage line. General St. Clair, mounted on a horse that an aide had caught for him, rode in the centre, and on we went, leaving behind us our cannon and our hurt, the wildest rout that troops of our nation have ever known, and by far the most terrible.

Colonel Darke, one of our brave border officers, led the charge, and around him gathered all the frontiersmen and the stanchest of the soldiers. So fierce was our rush that the Indians were thrown from the road, and through the opening the remains of the army dashed, the savages at once closing in behind and hang-

ing upon the rear of our flying force, busy with tomahawks and scalping-knives.

Such a defeat as ours is bad, but such a flight is far worse. Only the oldest and wariest Indian fighters retained their presence of mind. The raw army, hacked continually by Indian bullets, the savage war-whoop sounding always behind it, was mad with terror. Many of the men threw away their guns, knowing that any weight would impede their flight, while the bravest turned to defend the rear as best they could and hold back the merciless pursuit. Many deeds of courage, too, did I witness on that day. I saw a provision packer, who had already given his horse to a wounded soldier, enabling the latter to escape, pick up a boy fallen from exhaustion, and carry him on his back in the press and whirl of the flying army. I learned long afterward that both escaped, although the brave packer stopped again on the way to bind up the hurt of a wounded man. Such things as these offset acts of cowardice, and I have noticed often that in moments of panic and despair the greatness and baseness of the human race alike are shown.

The old frontiersmen and the few regulars left were now the last bulwark of the fleeing army, its sole defence against the horde of savages, who followed it through the woods and strove to complete with bullet and tomahawk the ruin that they had begun. Nor should I forget Osseo, that valiant Indian who on this day achieved deeds worthy of the best knight who ever rode through the pages of a French romance. I think that a song of battle was singing in his ears; all the impulses passed down by many generations of savage life were sweeping him on; his black eyes were alight, his muscles drawn like whipcord; his brown body would flash past me, and some warrior, too daring, would fall beneath his tomahawk; now and then he uttered his own long, thrilling war-whoop as a defiance to our enemies, and

though the savages sought zealously for his life, no bullet or blade touched him. He fought like one who had a grievance against the Northwestern tribes, and I, although not knowing what it was, remembered to be thankful that we profited by it.

Just in front of us a sergeant's wife fell to the ground in terror, and another woman carrying a little child in her arms sank down exhausted. Osseo seized the child, the woman shrinking from him in fright, and then rushing at him with her hands to rescue her little one, thinking that he belonged to the savage army. But Osseo took her by the arm, and still carrying the child, helped them on in their flight. I raised the sergeant's wife to her feet, and having found a place for her in a wagon, the horses of which still survived the Indian bullets, rejoined Osseo.

The retreat now demanded the whole attention of all who knew the ways of the woods. If one flees in a panic and the object that causes the panic pursues, it is but natural for the panic to increase. The danger that hangs on behind grows manifold, and when that danger was so real and terrible as ours there was naught that could restrain the more timorous among our troops. Such men as these no longer felt any sense of disgrace, and they had no thought but to reach Fort Jefferson, the last post built by the army in its advance into the Northwest, and shelter themselves behind its stockades.

But another thought was in the minds of the old frontiersmen who sought to keep back the pressing swarms of Indians, and it was of the border people whom this routed and fleeing army had come to protect and avenge. The tale of the Indian atrocities already filled with horror the minds of those who heard; but, flushed by such a victory, the tribes would become far bolder and more enterprising than ever. There would not be in all the circuit of the West a cabin that was safe. The tomahawk and the scalping knife would find vic-

tims from Pennsylvania to the Mississippi. The woods would be filled with warriors seeking to emulate the great killing when St. Clair was beaten, and the rage for white scalps, whether of man, woman, or child, would burn in the veins of every tribe, even to those beyond the farthest end of Lake Superior, and such was what came to pass. White men have done wrongs on the border, but surely nothing that ever justified such cruelties as our vanguard of settlers have suffered.

The Indian pursuit began to slacken after a distance of four or five miles and then ceased altogether. It may be that they wished to return to the field and make their ghastly collection of scalps. Surely there was enough for them, as upon that fatal day between six and seven hundred of our men—about half the army—were killed outright and scalped, and half the remainder were wounded. Nearly all the officers were slain, and among them Colonel Oldham, the leader of the Kentucky militia, who fell gallantly at the head of his men early in the action, and Major Clark, who was shot down while seeking to cover the retreat. Colonel Darke, who commanded one wing, saw his youngest son killed upon the field, and he himself was badly wounded, though escaping with his life. But why should I continue the tale and tell of so many good men losing their lives through the stubborn folly of General St. Clair, who despised his enemy and neglected the commonest precautions? I say with deliberation that his was the chief fault.

We met later in the day the little regiment of regular troops that had been sent back after the deserting militia, so missing the battle, but serving very well now to cover our retreat. Thus the ghastly procession continued until about nightfall it reached Fort Jefferson, thirty miles from the battlefield, and took refuge behind its palisades. Never did the sun set upon a more miserable band.

I saw my cousin, Jasper Lee, once in this flight—I

heard that he fought cautiously in the battle—and he said to me in a patronizing tone that was more insolent than abuse:

"You have borne yourself very well to-day, John."

"Have I?" I replied. "I hope that I shall be able to speak as well of you."

I wasted no more words upon him, having made a resolution which I awaited only our arrival at the fort to carry out.

CHAPTER IX

A DANCE BY TORCHLIGHT

THE sun went down on the forest, which now hid the black tragedy of St. Clair's defeat, but those who lay behind the walls of Fort Jefferson still beheld the tomahawk in every bush. They looked fearfully over their scanty numbers, and saw that half were gone. They quivered at the lightest sound, and told each other that they had not come from New York and Philadelphia to fight invisible demons for two dollars a month, thus mingling unconscious comedy with such real tragedy. I felt true pity for men who had been led blindly into a situation with which they were so little fitted to cope, and one could not afford to despise even the fraction that had shown cowardice. Better troops both of our own nation and others, taken in surprise by the savages, had fled more than once, and mingled with these, the only thought of whom had been flight, were the many who had risked their lives over and over again to save the army from destruction. But my duty there was done, and it was not for me to linger at Fort Jefferson.

I refilled my bullet pouch and powder-horn, and sought Osseo, finding him by the palisade, leaning against it, with his eyes almost closed, yet watching the forest. He was resting, permitting himself to float upon the border-land of sleep, and yet not dulling his senses so far that he could not watch for enemies. Winchester was near him; he had seen the defeat, and as he stood

there with closed eyes I knew that he was thinking of the great tragedy.

"Osseo," I said, "it is time to go, and I need your help."

"I am ready," he replied. I knew from the first that he would be waiting.

"And so am I," said Winchester quietly.

"You!" I exclaimed. "Why, Winchester, this is no work of yours!"

"It is," he said in the same quiet but stubborn tone. "I know that you are going for Miss Carew, and I want to help. Besides, I've been thinking, Lee, how I'd feel if the girl at home in England—there's one, you know—were in her place. I don't understand as much about this forest business as you and the Indian, but I might be handy in case of a fight. I'm going."

This was a long speech for Winchester, but there was no bluster about him, the firm temper of the man speaking in his voice.

"The Englishman is brave," said Osseo, "and he is ready to give his life for his friend. He shall go with us."

When our gratitude is strongest we like but little to speak of it, and so I merely said to Winchester:

"I owe you for much, Winchester, and the debt is growing."

He made a slight gesture as if he would wave the matter aside, and with that it was settled.

Although the work for which I had volunteered was done, and we of the West, as I repeat, were a very free people, I thought it right, inasmuch as I had served with St. Clair through a most arduous affair, to secure a formal leave of absence, and with such intention I sought an officer empowered to give the necessary authority. I was passed from one to another until I reached my cousin, Jasper Lee.

"And so," he said with peculiar insolence, "you wish

to leave us upon some vague adventure, which for all we know may be a traitorous expedition to the savages."

"I doubt whether the savages would look upon me as a friend, Jasper, after the history of to-day," I replied, "and, moreover, I seek the rescue of Miss Carew. I also wish to inform you that if I do not obtain your permission I shall go without it."

But he kept his countenance fairly well.

"I shall seek Miss Carew myself," he said. "I have always had it in mind. Only my duty here has delayed me. It is fitting that I should do so, and with an armed force. You can not accomplish anything."

"The more numerous the rescuing parties the better it will be for Miss Carew," I said, "and I wish to tell you again, Jasper, that I shall depart within the half hour on my errand."

"Go talk to General St. Clair," he replied in an ill humour. "He is within there. The affair is not mine in any particular, and I will have naught to do with it."

He jerked his finger over his shoulder, as he spoke, toward the door of an inner room, which I pushed open and entered when I received the reply "Come," in response to my knock. It was merely a rude log chamber, such as one would expect to find even as the commandant's office in a frontier fort, and General St. Clair sat in a chair near the window which looked out upon the courtyard. I say "sat" through courtesy, as his appearance was more like that of a dead man placed in a sitting position, and though his eyes were turned upon the courtyard he saw nothing. His heavy features had fallen, the usually ruddy face was pallid, and the lids drooped over his eyes. The same blanket coat that he had worn throughout the battle, pierced now by eight bullets, still hung from his shoulders. This man, the grandson of an earl, full of preconceived opinions, despising his enemy, having all the faults of the class to which he had been born in the Old World—faults which

he transplanted with himself to the New—was now, despite his courage, crushed by his great disaster. Perhaps he was thinking then, in turn, of the massacre that he had just beheld, and the warning given to him by the great President back there in the East who repeated over and over again: "Beware of an ambush! Beware of an ambush!" I felt a certain pity and sympathy for him, and it was mingled with anger, too, because he had brought such a terrible misfortune upon the border.

He did not see me, or, if seeing me, it made no impression upon his mind, and I stood there a few moments, determined to uphold my own dignity as a free ranger of the Western woods and my own master in all things. But his manner and speech were contrary to my expectations.

"What is it, Mr. Lee?" he asked at last in a most gentle tone. "Is it possible that I can now do anything for anybody?"

I related to him briefly the story of Miss Carew's capture, and my wish to rescue her if possible.

"I thank you for your courtesy, Mr. Lee," he said with the greatest and most sincere politeness. "I know well that you need not ask me for such permission, and I know still better that if I had heeded your words I would not now be here behind these logs, mourning my men, lying scalped and mutilated there in that hideous forest. Oh, my poor lads!"

He put his face in his hands, as if he would hide from his eyes the sight upon which they had looked that morning, and I, feeling an increase of sympathy, and knowing there was nothing more to be said, slipped from the room, leaving General St. Clair to his remorse.

It was a cold moonlit night when we three—Osseo, Winchester, and I—left Fort Jefferson and entered the forest, going back upon the trail of the stricken army. A few hundred yards from the fort the lights disappeared, and with them all sound. Again the wilderness,

lone and bare, stretched around us. The white skim of snow was yet on the earth and the trees, and the air was so still that the dry leaves gave forth no rustle.

"The warriors rejoice over their triumph," said Osseo, "and it is easy for us to pass through the woods."

We followed for many miles the broad road over which the army had fled, passing now and then horses dead of their wounds, and came after awhile to the point where the pursuit had ended.

I was sure that the Indians would gather at the battlefield, rejoicing there over their victory, and we advanced cautiously in that direction, searching the forest for the lightest noise or other sign that would indicate the presence of our foes or danger of an ambush. But we saw nothing, and no sound save the ordinary voices of the night came to our ears. We veered more than once from the woods and approached the road over which the army had advanced and fled alike, beholding now the ghastly traces of the rout, the dead and scalped bodies of our soldiers, and bands of wolves gathering already for the feast. But we saw no Indians. Nor was it needful to them to throw out scouts lest our army should return and seek with some sudden blow vengeance upon the victors. A force cut up as ours had been could not strike back for many a month.

We drew near to the fatal field, still following a slow course, by choice, through the densest undergrowth, pressing as close as we could, and lying down at last in a thick clump of bushes, whence we could see the lights of torches dancing in the open, where our camp had been, and hear the chant of the Indian song of triumph. I judged that it was the old squaws hanging upon the rear of the savage army who sang, while the warriors occupied themselves with collecting the spoil—the weapons, provisions, clothing, and scalps—a rich booty,

the finest that they had taken since Braddock's defeat, so like St. Clair's.

The number of torches increased by and by, and the light grew better. We saw hundreds of warriors passing and repassing while the chant of the Indian women went on.

"The warriors make merry," whispered Osseo. "It is not often that a leader like the General-who-never-walks comes against them."

Not often, fortunately!

"Let us creep a little closer," I said.—"Be careful, Winchester! A sound no lighter than that made by the squirrel as he trips over the bark might betray us."

"Don't be afraid that I'll be rash," he replied. "I don't want to fall into the hands of those yelling devils, at least not until I have a chance to prove that I'm an Englishman."

We crept a rod or two farther, lying almost flat upon our faces, and unmindful of the light veil of snow that covered the earth, stopping at last at the crest of a tiny hill crowned with bushes, where we could see the battlefield, and ourselves lie hidden.

"What a sight!" said Winchester.

"Yes," I replied. "'Tis a bad thing enough to war with Christians, but 'tis the ghastliest of all to war with savages, always bearing in mind that such gentlemen as Osseo here are not savages."

More than a hundred torches illuminated the stretch of open that had been our camp, and was the scene, too, of our greatest slaughter, but it was a fantastic light that they made as they were moved about by the warriors and the old squaws, who were now dancing the scalp dance. Well had they the right, their ways considered, to dance it. The chant of the women was monotonous, hardly ever varying in tone, but the warriors often broke into a shout like unto the war-whoop

as they waved aloft the horrid trophies which I shall not name nor describe.

Three or four fires were burning, but the dancing warriors, despite the coldness of the weather, wore only the breech clout, and their brown bodies appeared and reappeared in the fantastic and fitful light like shadows; truly they had fought us that day like a phantom, but none the less terrible, host. Others stood about, laden with their spoil—rifles, muskets, pistols, swords, blankets, and all the other supplies of an army. The cannon which we had spiked and abandoned stood near; and everywhere—between the feet of the dancers, among those who looked on, and in the edge of the wood—lay our dead, hundreds of them.

"I thank God," whispered Winchester, "that I shall never again see such a sight, and yet it is well to have seen it."

I saw presently the man for whom I was looking. Hoyoquim, the Wyandot—in the full panoply of his rank, the battle stains gone from him, his blanket thrown over his shoulder, an officer's splendid sword, taken from its fallen owner, swinging at his side—walked among the warriors, grave, dignified, and most evidently a king of his kind. I knew that the breast of the savage throbbed with a mighty exultation; and this, too, was the captor of Rose Carew.

Hoyoquim presently joined Little Turtle, the head chief of the confederation, and to them soon came other chiefs. They drew apart, and after talking earnestly for a little while gave some orders to the warriors. The dancing then ceased abruptly, most of the torches were extinguished, and each man taking his spoil began to put it in most convenient shape.

"The warriors are about to depart for their villages," said Osseo.

It was even so. The Indian army was scattering with the same facility with which it had gathered, each

band going to its own wigwams, and already some were departing. We lay very close, but we were in rough ground where the savages were not likely to pass, and we had little fear. In a few moments all the noises ceased, and the last warrior vanished in the forest.

CHAPTER X

A KNIGHT OF FRANCE

We did not follow directly upon the Indian trail, knowing that such would be a vain proceeding, and bristling with danger. Impatience must yield to prudence—a necessity nearly always present in the life of the frontiersman—and so we turned in a great curve with a general northwesterly direction, and sped on our path as fast as the breath of Winchester, the slowest of the party, would permit us.

The village of the Wyandots was far away on the shores of Lake Huron, and I was convinced that Hoyoquim, her captor, knowing of St. Clair's advance, had not found time to take Rose Carew there; it was probable, therefore, that he had left her at the village of the Miamis, and I wished to learn as soon as possible the truth or falsity of my surmise.

Both Osseo and I knew the country, and by turns we led the way, no one of the three speaking, but hastening on, intent upon our errand, until about the midnight hour or a little beyond it, when Osseo, who was then in advance, stopped and pointed with his forefinger. I saw far in the forest a faint gleam, no more than that of a firefly, but steady, and to the eye of a frontiersman significant.

"What do you think it is, Osseo?" I asked.

He shook his head.

"Looks like a camp fire," he replied, "but can't say. Maybe not, maybe so. Suppose we see?"

His suggestion was quite appropriate, as no true forester ever passes by anything unexplained, not even a trifle, not to mention such an important matter as a light in the night.

We pushed our way carefully among the trees, and there was good need of caution, as I have seldom seen a more dense growth of forest and underbrush. The soil beneath our feet was as black as tar, and everything seemed to have grown upon it spontaneously. Twigs and boughs were so thick that, despite the fall of the leaves, we could scarce see the sky overhead. Coming thus through a screen almost impervious, the light did not grow rapidly, but remained steady, and we were soon confirmed in our belief that it was a camp fire.

"Some great fool," repeated Osseo. "He lies down to sleep by the warm fire, and when he wakes he may find his scalp swinging at the belt of the Miami or Wyandot."

Yet it seemed incredible to me that any one should go to sleep alone, even beside his own bed of coals, in a country infested by hostile Indians and not twenty miles from the scene of St. Clair's great defeat. I had no doubt, however, that Osseo was right.

We continued our approach, Winchester making his way with great difficulty through the bushes and briers, but doing very well for one of his limited experience. As we came near, a most appetizing odour arose; it told of frying venison and beaver tail.

"The man does not sleep," said Osseo.

His remark was superfluous. The stranger or strangers, whoever he or they might be, evidently were engaged in cooking supper, late though the hour was. In truth, it must be a man or men with the most child-like faith in the innocence of the wilderness. Osseo was a little in advance, and lying down he crept closer, while we crouched in the brushwood, awaiting his re-

port, but he stopped when he had gone a few yards, and signalled to us. We approached, and then we heard distinctly a low, humming sound. It came from the vicinity of the fire, and I recognised it as the voice of somebody who sang softly to himself.

"It is one man!" said Osseo. "Behold!"

I rose to my knees and looked over the tops of the bushes, getting a view of the camp fire and the man who sat beside it, or rather moved about it. As well as I could see, he was young, with blonde hair, blue eyes, and a fair face. His dress was a strange mixture of the American frontier style and Old World fashion, being composed of tanned deerskin except the coat, which was a sort of tunic of black velvet trimmed with silver lace, and the hat, which was a splendid three-cornered affair, also adorned with silver lace.

He carried a pistol and knife in his belt, and his rifle lay on the ground at least ten feet from him, which on the frontier is a most rash and foolish distance. But the stranger seemed to have never a care. The song that he hummed was gay and careless in tone, as if dealing with love and war, and he bestowed not a single look upon the Indian-haunted wilderness about him. All his attention was reserved for the late supper which he alternately cooked and ate, cutting most appetizing strips from a haunch of venison and grilling them over the coals on the end of a sharp stick. Near him lay a small leather case bound with silver, which evidently contained baggage.

Winchester snuffed the odour of the venison.

"It makes me hungry," he said.

But the stranger's appetite was nearly satisfied when we arrived, and in a few moments he ceased his culinary operations and threw away the sharp stick. Then he lifted a blanket from the ground and spread it over a fallen log, turning the next moment to the little silver-bound case, which he unlocked with a key. He lifted

from this a very much smaller case, and after relocking the first opened the second.

"What under the sun is he about?" whispered Winchester.

The stranger took from the little case three or four hollow and polished pieces of wood, mounted with silver, and fitted them together. Then he sat on the blanket-covered log and put his mouth to one of the little holes in the tube.

"He is about to make music," whispered Osseo. "Lo! the strange white man is in the keeping of Manito. He is mad."

"Listen!" said Winchester.

The man began to play the flute—not like a mere amateur, not like one who blows his breath into a piece of hollow wood that he may hear himself make a noise, but like one who played because the soul of music was in him; in truth, like a master. His own face proved it, because, serving as a mirror for the mind beneath, it showed that his thoughts wandered away with the music to whatever land of fancy the latter led. It was a mellow note, at times low and pathetic, then wild and high, and I too, like the player, wandered with it; I saw my boyhood, the great days in the early years of the war with my brave comrades, felt the fire of battle, endured my disgrace a second time, and beheld Rose Carew's face again. I looked at Osseo; his eyes glistened. It was instinctive in this noble man to love music, and I wondered where he was roving on the note of the flute. But I did not dream of asking him.

The player ceased, took his flute apart again, and returned it to the box.

"Lo! he is mad and in the keeping of Manito," repeated Osseo. "He walks the forest as safe as the papoose in its father's wigwam."

He spoke of the fact, so well known, that the Indians consider all insane people in the special keeping of the

Great Spirit, and therefore never harm them, no matter what their race. But the man turned toward us a clear-cut, thoughtful face, and I saw well enough that he was not mad, at least according to white standards—perhaps all whites are mad according to red standards. The features were of one not over thirty, and seemed French to me, much like those of the gallant young men of high birth who came over to help us in the last days of the Revolutionary contest.

"Let us speak to him, Osseo," I said.

Rising, we walked into the little glade in which the stranger had pitched his tent—I say tent metaphorically, as besides his arms he had only a blanket and the little leather case and its contents. He showed no surprise at our approach, receiving us with a politeness which was neither slight nor overdone, but just what it should be.

"Will you share my fire?" he said. "I have no seat to offer save this log, which is at a convenient distance, but not so soft as a chair. Sit there and let me fry you some venison. It is of the best quality, I assure you. *Sapristi!* I should know. I have never eaten better from the king's own forest."

We would travel fast, but we knew that food was necessary to those who would arrive in time, and we sat silently upon the log, awaiting the service of this strange man, who upon his own part proceeded with much deliberation.

"Are you aware," I asked, when I had eaten a slice of the venison, "that your life is in the utmost danger?"

"I did not know it," he replied calmly. "Not from you three, at least. You have accepted my hospitality, you have broken bread with me, you have eaten of my salt, and it would be a wicked deed now to turn a hostile face toward me."

He looked at the three of us closely and then smiled.

"No," he said, "I do not fear you."

"I did not mean that there was danger from us," I continued. "All this region is infested by Indians of the most warlike and ferocious nature, and you are now not more than a half day's journey from the villages of the Miamis, the most powerful of the tribes."

"I am not an American," he replied, "and the savages are not at war with my nation nor me."

"But you are a white man, and the savages do not make nice distinctions. They might shoot you first and make the inquiry as to your nationality afterward."

"I take the chances. Would this life be pleasant and interesting unless chance played so great a part in it? I surmise not."

"At all events, you can not be as indifferent as you pretend," I persisted.

"And at all events," he replied quickly, "the precision of your language and your manner indicate that you are not the mere hunter you seem."

It was obvious that I could not get at him by such manner of questioning, and so I told him of St. Clair's defeat and the slaughter, and then of our errand. His eyes kindled into interest as I proceeded with the narrative, and he made many comments in a quick, sharp way.

"It was a trap," he said, when I concluded, "and a raw army following a blind general walked into it. We French have our faults, but we would never do that. We are the best woodsmen, we know the Indian, we can make ourselves his friends, we learn his ways; we find the land first and we give it a name, but what does it profit us? The blind Saxon in the end takes it from us."

He was sad momentarily, and stared into the coals, but then his face brightened, and he said quite cheerily:

"Now you have told me who you are, and it is fitting that I should tell you of myself. The courtesy of the wilderness demands it. I am Hector de Chamillard,

baron of France. I do not mention the title as a boast, but as an explanation, and the name Hector has no significance in my case. My barony was wasted, not by me, but before my time, until there is naught left save for the money lender and the tax gatherer. The wars are over for the moment, and since the birth of Hector de Chamillard does not allow him to work, he brings himself to the New World in the vague hope of finding a good fairy, and, moreover, to see the splendid regions which France has owned and lost—it would take him a long time and the circuit of the globe to see them all; so I am at present, and contrary to your supposition, a mere wanderer."

"But great events have been happening in that France of yours," I said. "Rumours of them are coming even here to us in the American woods. A cool head and a bold mind might make a high place there for themselves."

"I have heard them, too," he replied, the momentary sadness returning to his face, "and that is the best reason of all why I can not return to France now. By birth I am with the nobility, by sympathy with the peasantry. My position is very difficult: my birth does not allow me to associate with men of my own sympathies, and my sympathies do not allow me to associate with men of my own birth; so I remain in the forest until I can see a path clear before me. Truly it is a great forest, and man may admire."

He looked up at the dark woods which encircled us like a wall.

"And you will not go back to France?" I asked.

"I do not say that," he replied. "I do not scorn civilization; far from it. Paris has many delights, and it is still the capital of the world. I could take my pleasures there if circumstances were fitting; meanwhile I take them here. I hunt and explore, and man so far has not disturbed me; the forest is my dining-room, and

my good rifle the *garçon* who serves me with a bill of fare that pleases me. I wander where I will, and see mountains, great rivers, and great lakes; my life is not bare, and it will please me in my old age to remember these things."

Clearly the man was a philosopher, and I could appreciate his resignation, having in mind my own case.

"I have been in Paris, too," said Winchester, who had not spoken hitherto, "and I know its contrast with this forest. But you are right when you say that each has its pleasures."

De Chamillard looked inquiringly at Winchester.

"You are an Englishman, I take it," he said, "and you and I have been enemies for a thousand years. Let us be friends for the moment. Your hand, Mr. Winchester."

Winchester extended his hand frankly, and the Frenchman shook it with heartiness. We four stood there a moment—the Indian, the American, the Englishman, and the Frenchman—but in perfect accord. Then I gave the Frenchman a parting salute, as we did not have time to tarry, but he put his rifle on one shoulder and his portmanteau on the other and said:

"Messieurs, I travel with you."

"Ours," I said, "is an errand full of danger, in which you would be involved."

"I have heard your story; there is a beautiful lady who must be rescued, and since I have been a knight errant of no use, I should now become a knight errant of some use. I shall help you."

It was said with an air of decision and finality that showed him a man of courage and will, and likely to prove a strong addition to our party. Moreover, a sudden idea concerning him occurred to me, so I said:

"Come with us and be sure that you do not lose your flute."

"Part with my best friend? On the faith of a De Chamillard I swear not! But why do you value my flute?"

"Because you play it so beautifully."

He took off his cocked hat and made me a sweeping bow.

"I thank you for your compliment, which I know was intended as an evasion of my question," he said. "And now lead on; I follow."

Thus, and without further discourse, we adopted him into our party, resuming our journey through the woods.

Winchester and De Chamillard dropped a little in the rear presently, and talked in low tones.

"Of what do they speak?" I asked Osseo.

Dark as the night was, I distinctly saw a twinkle in the eyes of the chief.

"The Frenchman and the Englishman," he said, "conduct a great war between themselves. They go back many, many moons, and they tell of mighty battles in which the children of Onontio * and the children of Corlear † fought against each other, and lo! as one tells it the children of Onontio have always won, and as the other tells it the children of Corlear have always won. Manito alone knows which is right; he has not given to Osseo the wisdom to judge between them."

"You think them both mad, Osseo?" I asked.

He shook his head sorrowfully.

"It is the will of Manito," he replied, "that it shall take many kinds of men to make his world, and who is Osseo, to question his wisdom?"

But I knew full well that Osseo's conviction of their madness did not injure them in his good opinion. It

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* The French Governor General of Canada.

† The English Governor of the old Province of New York.

was part of his lofty nature to consider it a quality with which they had been endowed specially by God, and hence entitled to all respect and consideration; I say again that perhaps there was something in his claim of red superiority over the white race.

CHAPTER XI

A MAGIC FLUTE

We lay down in the forest at sunrise and slept soundly, all but one man, who was relieved in turn by the others, and we did not approach the Miami village until late in the afternoon. This, comprising several hundred lodges and log-cabins, defended by a triple palisade, was pitched upon the banks and hills of the Wabash River, and around it were small fields, in which crops of maize and melons had been gathered before the frosts, but which stood bare now, forbidding our further approach, especially as various mangy curs, wonderfully keen of sight and scent, like all the Indian dogs, wandered about the open spaces.

We knew by the calm appearance of the village that the victorious warriors had not arrived yet, though they must be very near.

The sun was still an hour above the earth when we heard a high-pitched cry at our right—not a war-whoop, but a swelling shout of triumph, the signal that the warriors were approaching. It was answered from the village, and then the old men, the squaws, and the children, who had been left behind, came forth to meet the victors, silent at first while the warriors were shouting their own Indian whoop, and imitating, too, the howl of the wolf and the panther, and the growl of the bear. Then these non-combatants answered with a great cry of triumph, after which the squaws began to sing and dance their queer dance, which consists more in

jumping up and down to the rhythm of a monotonous chant than anything else. But the song increased in volume when they saw what a magnificent spoil the victors were bringing, enough to stock the village more years than any of them would live.

When the warriors ceased the answering halloos, they marched in silence and with dignity between the applauding lines of squaws.

They crossed the fields and reached the outer palisade, where they fired their rifles in the air as the fine finish of the celebration. Then they went to the lodges with their spoil, while the old squaws sang the death song of those who had fallen, and the young women cooked venison and buffalo meat for the returned.

The singing and wailing of the squaws ceased after awhile, and the sun dropped low in the west. Osseo looked inquiringly at me.

"Has Lee a plan?" he asked.

"I have, Osseo," I replied.

He asked no more, but stood waiting until in my own good time I should make it known.

I turned to De Chamillard.

"Will you play the flute again for us?" I asked.

He stared at me in surprise.

"You seem to have my flute upon your mind, Monsieur Lee," he said. "Did I ever think that my poor music was to win such applause in these vast and lonely woods?"

"Will you play the flute for us again?" I repeated, "and play it not only like a musician, but also like the brave man that you are?"

He laughed.

"It shall not be said of Hector de Chamillard that he resisted such a flattering appeal as that," he replied.

"Then give us your arms, take only your flute in your hand, and as you play it walk into that village like some pilgrim of old, seeking alms."

"Monsieur Lee," he replied, "I give you this credit: when you ask for a favour you make it a large one; you are not a small man in any particular."

His tone was complimentary rather than accusing, but I hastened to explain.

"If you approach the village unarmed and playing your flute, the Indians will consider you insane," I said. "Nothing else that you might do could shake them in this belief. Even Osseo, who has seen more of the white men than most Indians have, thought you mad when we approached your camp fire in the forest, and he thinks so yet—do you not, Osseo?"

Osseo nodded his head gravely.

"On my honour," exclaimed De Chamillard, "I have never before been accused of madness."

"It is not a discredit," I continued, "and just now it may be of great service to us. Go among these Indians; you may enter wherever you wish, for, as one mad, you are, so they think, a special favourite of Manito, which is Indian for the Great Spirit, otherwise God. Find where Miss Carew is kept—we are sure that she is there; tell her to be of good heart, that her friends are by and will rescue her. To-morrow afternoon come back into the forest as near this point as you can. When you hear the cry of the whip-poor-will, walk toward the sound as quietly and secretly as possible. You will find us there, and then you may tell us all you have seen and heard."

"Which means that I am to act like the woman in the Bible and spy out the land?"

"Even so."

"Then I accept the proposal. If any man had told me yesterday that I would do such a thing, 'Liar' would have been the first word on my lips, and I would have defended the epithet; but to-day I do it. The De Chamillards were never practical people, which perhaps is the reason why I am here, a beggar, embarking upon

such a venture. But it is well to risk one's life even for the lady love of a new friend."

I know that I flushed a little, because he laughed and looked at me with a twinkling eye.

"There is one promise I make you, Monsieur Lee," he said, "and I make it on the oath of a De Chamillard."

"What is that?"

"All our family love beauty, and women have been one of our weaknesses, but I pledge you my word that I will not seek to make love to the lady."

"I have no claim upon her," I said.

He laughed again.

"Perhaps not," he said, "but you wish to have. No, I go only in behalf of my friend, not in my own."

I could not help smiling at him, his fine-drawn point of honour, and his rising gaiety as he embarked upon this strange venture. I saw clearly that the errand appealed to a romantic and daring spirit. Chance had put in our hands the best man to carry it through.

He gave us his arms, took the flute in his hands, and entered the field that lay between us and the village.

"He is really mad," said Winchester.

But I knew that in his English heart of hearts he thought all Frenchmen mad.

When De Chamillard had gone a few yards into the open he put the flute to his lips and began to play a chansonette, some pretty French tune, which I dare say had been heard in the halls of the Great and the Little Trianon, with small thought by any one that it would be repeated here in these wilds. He changed in a moment to an air of love and longing that moved us with its pathos.

He walked steadily on toward the village, and I knew that he was seen now by the warriors. One raised his rifle as if to take aim, but quickly dropped it, for when this warrior looked again he saw that the strange white man was in the keeping of Manito.

De Chamillard's ancestors were Crusaders, I am sure, sent by the spirit of adventure as well as the love of Church to the Holy Land, as even from our covert we saw that he bore himself in the most jaunty manner; and I am equally certain, too, that his soul was in what he now did. The warriors, the women, and the children were coming forth in a great swarm, gazing at him with the most intense curiosity, and making no sound. Their opinion, as one knowing the Indian nature and the Indian manner could tell, was formed already. The Frenchman was to them a man blasted by a stroke of Manito's lightning, and therefore under his protection. They made no further movement, but waited in front of the village as he advanced.

De Chamillard presently took the flute from his lips, and to our surprise began to sing with much expression in a clear, strong voice, evidently a voice that had been trained by good masters. This was his song:

"En mon cœur n'est point escrite
La rose ni autre fleur,
C'est toi belle Marguerite
Par qui j'ai cette couleur."

I had heard the song before; I knew that its name was The Young Captive, and the fitness of it moved me. I thought not then of De Chamillard, but of Rose Carew. He sang other verses, and then changed suddenly to a new song, an air with a hop and a skip and a jump and a merry note, and these were its words:

"J'ai toujours, Bacchus
Célébré ton jus
N'en perdon pas la coutume;
Seconde moi,
Que peut, sans toi
Ma plume.

"Coule à long traits
Dans mon épais
Volume

Viens, mon cher patron
Sois mon Apollon
Viens, mon cher ami! Que j' t' hume!"

When he ceased the song he danced one or two steps, just the suggestion of a dance, and then, putting the flute to his lips, began to play again. I have always thought that De Chamillard, were it not for his birth, might have been an actor. In truth, he had the gifts. To fill such a rôle as the one he was playing now he did not have to act; he lived it; he was in very essence and being a child of God, as the Indians term it. He continued his steady progress until the crowd of savages closed behind him, and we saw him no more, although the notes of the flute still came to us faintly.

"I told you that he was really mad," said Winchester. "He did not have to play the part."

Even Osseo smiled. Then we withdrew farther into the forest, not caring to risk the notice of some stray warrior. Having nothing now to do but wait, we sought sleep again, wrapping ourselves in our blankets, with the exception of one who watched. A wise frontiersman always rests and sleeps when there is opportunity, knowing that it may not come again soon. We had a sufficient supply of jerked venison with us, and when we were hungry we ate. Thus the night and most of the next day passed, and when the sun dropped low Osseo imitated the cry of the whip-poor-will so perfectly that even I, with the experience of years in the woods, could not have told the difference.

"He will never come," said the incredulous Winchester. "The Indians have burned him at the stake long before this."

"The Indians have not burned him at the stake, and he will come," was my rejoinder.

Osseo repeated his cry, all the time intently watching the forest in every direction, since others than the one wished might answer the whip-poor-will call. He

put his ear to the earth presently, and when he rose again he said:

"The Man-who-blows-the-hollow-stick comes, and he is alone."

Osseo once more gave the cry of the whip-poor-will, and then, waiting a little longer, we saw at a great distance the figure of De Chamillard advancing among the tree trunks. But we did not remain where we were until he could reach us; instead, we moved farther and farther to the right, continually drawing him after us with repetitions of the whip-poor-will cry. We adopted this course in order to be sure that no Indians were following the Frenchman, and at last, when we were convinced, we stopped. He came to us presently, flushed with exertion.

"I had begun to think that whip-poor-will was the most evasive bird that ever uttered his lonesome note," he said. "*Ma foi!* but I have had a walk."

"Have you seen her?" I cried.

"I have," he said, "and on my honour, Monsieur Lee, it was only my promise to you that kept me from trying to make love to her, and I may say to you this very moment that I am sorry I gave the promise, although I think it would never have got further than an attempt."

"What of her—the girl?"

"She is well, and she hopes again, since she has heard that her friends are near, seeking her rescue. But I will begin where the story does, and tell you the whole of it. When I left you, playing the flute and marching toward the village of the savages, I, the madman, the man who is in the keeping of God—as our Indian friend frankly puts it, and as our English friend secretly believes—began to feel the grandeur of my task, and my bosom swelled with inspiration—it is our French way sometimes; and I played the flute with a new mastery and sang French lyrics as I had never sung them before.

The savages met me, and what you told me, Monsieur Lee, was even so; they deemed me perfectly mad, and I confirmed them in the belief, playing my flute at intervals and marching wherever my changeful mind might incline me, sometimes into the lodges of the warriors, where I helped myself once to a piece of most succulent venison, and none said me nay—just as if I was the Lord's anointed, Louis of France, honouring one of his peasants by taking what he fancied from the contents of his cottage. It is a pleasant emotion, to feel that you may do as you choose and pay no price, and I continued in my lordly career.

"Two white men present—renegades, I suppose—seemed to suspect me, but they dared not molest me, as the chiefs sternly forbade any interference with my career. Moreover, my music pleased the savages, and I wandered about the village, looking with all my eyes and listening with all my ears—I know a little of the Miami dialect—learning presently that the captive lady was kept near the centre of the village in the largest hut until such time as the chief, Hoyoquim, her captor, could carry her to his own village. Meantime they were treating her with proper respect; and deeming it best not to proceed too rapidly, I lay down in the most comfortable wigwam that I could find and slept the night.

"I wandered about in the village a little while this morning, playing my flute at times, and at last undertook to enter the hut where the lady is imprisoned. The warrior on watch made no resistance, no more daring to lay a hand on me than if he were in truth a French peasant, and I the Lord's anointed. There I found the maiden in great grief, and near unto despair, but her spirits rose wonderfully when I told her that her friends were near, particularly when I mentioned you. Truly she has a courage! 'Is Mr. Lee out there in the woods?' she asked, and you alone she called by name. 'He is,'

I answered; 'and he will not go away without you.' 'Nor will he,' added she, very low and under her breath, although I heard her. She was much excited at first, but after that she was quite calm, and seemed to contemplate the future with more confidence than I can. When I came away I asked if she had any message to send, and she said only, 'Tell Mr. Lee that I have the utmost faith in him,' and so I relate it, although it seems to me that she might also have faith in messieurs the red gentleman, the English gentleman, and the French gentleman."

I thanked De Chamillard briefly for his achievement, feeling that he, like Winchester, would not care to listen to many words of gratitude, and then Winchester spoke.

"It is now my turn to go among the savages, Lee," he said. "I am of a nation that is not at war with them, and they will not harm me. Moreover, I am a fur-trader, and I know the chief, Hoyoquim, who is not without certain chivalrous instincts. It may be that he will take ransom for Miss Carew, and I can offer it."

I pondered awhile over his suggestion, and then I decided to improve upon it. I had feared at first that Winchester's presence with our army might involve him too in the Indian hatred, but since he was without apprehension on the point, it was not for me to imagine dangers for him, when the fate of Rose Carew perhaps depended upon his help.

"See Hoyoquim or Little Turtle, if you are able," I said, "and tell either that I wish to come with you and buy back Miss Carew. I know the Indian ways, and perhaps I can attract them with an offer. If they say that I may come in safety it will be even so, for they are men of honour."

He departed at once upon his mission, and returned about midnight.

"The head chief, Little Turtle, is absent," he said,

"but the Wyandot, Hoyoquim, who captured Miss Carew, is in the village. He says that you can come with me under the white flag, so to speak, and talk about the girl. If you and he do not agree, you may return to the forest in peace."

This was sufficient, and we prepared at once to enter the village, while Osseo and De Chamillard remained in the woods to await our return.

"If you do not return I shall go for you," the Frenchman said. "*Nom du chien*, how could I desert so interesting a friend?"

It was just at sunrise that we approached the village, and the barking of many mangy curs warned the Indians of our approach. One of those horrible, weazened old squaws who are always on watch about the outskirts of an Indian encampment came forward to meet us, and she was followed presently by others. We held up our hands to show that we were peaceful, and I said in Miami:

"We come with a message to the great chief Hoyoquim."

Then they conducted us to Hoyoquim, who received us beside the council fire, having made ready for our approach with all the formality practised by the Indians upon such occasions, and we, knowing that it was wisdom, paid heed to his ways.

CHAPTER XII

A BARGAIN MADE

THE firelight flickered and fell upon the face of the chief. He sat unmoved, his bronze features expressing a gravity that became one of his port and place, and naught else. I thought him a splendid type of savage man, massive and strong, the complete master of himself.

The coals smouldered and died down a little, making but a tiny point of fire in the forest, which stretched away in endless miles. The lodges of the Indian village were still dusky behind us, in the shadows of the trees, but the east was rosy with the rising sun.

Winchester and I, knowing the customs of this race, were silent too, gazing into the coals rather than at the face of the chief, and affecting indifference. Hoyoquim presently took his tomahawk from his belt and held it thoughtfully by the handle between his thumb and forefinger. It was a curious and beautiful weapon, the blade small and highly polished, and the head scooped out like a pipe. The handle was of white horn, hollow, and carved in fantastic designs. Winchester's eyes met mine for a moment, and then passed on. But I understood his look. He believed that the chief would consent to our request.

Black Eagle, as Hoyoquim was called by most of our people, took a small piece of tobacco from the deerskin pouch at his belt, put it in the hollow head of the tomahawk, and placed on top of it one of the red coals. He

drew two or three whiffs of smoke through the slender horn handle, then passed the pipe of peace to me, and it seemed especially fit that on this occasion the same pipe should have been the moment before the weapon of war. I, too, took the stem in my mouth, and having drawn the smoke, handed it in turn to Winchester, who, his duty performed, returned it to the chief.

Black Eagle let the fire and tobacco drop out of his tomahawk, and thrust the weapon back into his belt. Then he said to me:

"You are a man."

"It is my belief," I replied with a little pride. I trusted that I had borne myself well in my ten years' life in the wilderness, and the thought was not unpleasant.

"You are a man," he continued with the utmost gravity, "and so am I. Who should know this better than Hoyoquim and Lee?"

We sat face to face, old enemies who had sought each other's life more than once. I was completely in his power, but I had put myself there by my own choice, and I never doubted that he would keep faith. The group of warriors ten yards away were silent and solemn, apparently gazing with the deepest interest at vacancy, but I knew that no movement of ours escaped them. Around us curved the mighty forest, a wilderness that I liked and of which I had yet a certain fear at times, despite ten years of use and habit. Its depths and its immensity now and then oppressed me.

I was anxious to be at the business in hand, but I knew better than to hurry. I glanced again at Winchester. He was as grave as the chief, the early sunshine falling across his ruddy cheeks, his blue eyes calm and untroubled. I thanked him once more in my heart for his service to me in the affair, and swore silently that some day he should have repayment.

"Is the captive, the girl whom he took in Kentucky,

unharmed in the lodge of Black Eagle?" I asked at last, and unconsciously I bent forward to hear his answer. I saw the pink in Winchester's cheeks deepen, and his gaze rested directly upon the chief. But there was no expression upon the carven bronze of Black Eagle's face.

"The captive is as she was when she was taken in the far land of Kain-tuck-ee," he replied.

I breathed silent thanks. I remembered even then the pale face and agony of that mother in Kentucky, to whose entreaties I had said that I would bring back her daughter, should it be within my power.

"I would buy her from you for her own people," I said.

"What does Lee offer?" asked the chief, after another long silence.

"One hundred coins like this, to be paid into the hands of the friend of us both, the English trader," I replied.

I held up a golden guinea fresh from the mint of King George III. The sun glittered across it, and I saw a faint reflection of the gleam in the chief's eyes—the savages had begun to learn the value of gold; where does it not go?—but he shook his head.

I was surprised, and, let me confess it, a trifle bewildered, too. One hundred guineas on the frontier, where money was so scarce, was a great ransom, and I had not expected a refusal. But I kept my countenance.

"Does Black Eagle choose well," I asked, after another long silence. "One hundred golden coins like this I hold between my fingers will buy many muskets and much powder and ball at the British post."

"The muskets of the English are good," he replied, "but the rifles of the Long Knives are better."

My glance turned to my own favourite rifle lying in the hollow of my arm, a piece with a long, slender barrel of blue steel and a carved stock, a rifle at once

light, beautiful, and unerring. I knew that there was pride in my eye as I looked upon the weapon which had served its master so often and so well. Then I held it up that the gaze of the chief might fall directly upon it.

"If you will give me the girl," I said, "you shall have thirty rifles of a pattern like mine. How good this is you and your warriors should know."

It was a desperate throw to make such an offer, being held as treason among us to furnish rifles to the savages on any pretext; but I knew not what else to do, and at the moment I saw once more the face of that mother in far Kentucky. I felt that the deed would find forgiveness.

The eyes of the chief glistened for the first time as he looked at the rifle and heard my words, but it was a brief emotion. I beheld the next instant only the bronze of his face and the inscrutable black of his eyes.

"Hoyoquim would like the rifles," he replied, "but he will like the white girl better."

I glanced at Winchester and I saw his face fall. It was clear to me that he now regarded the case as hopeless. But I would not give up.

"Why does the chief wish to keep the white captive," I asked, though well I knew.

"She shall be a light in the lodge of Hoyoquim," he replied.

"Hoyoquim has wives of his own nation; why does he seek one of another race?"

"The white prisoner is fairer than the red maidens," he replied.

I saw Winchester shudder. He had told me more than once of a girl waiting for him in England, and I fancied that his imagination now put her in the place of the Kentucky captive. Well might he shudder, and well may you, who learn at what a price this land of ours was won.

I paused again and for a longer time than ever. I

knew naught to say nor which way to turn. And yet that pale face in Kentucky forbade me to go with empty hands. It was Black Eagle himself who ended the silence.

"Lee is a hunter and a warrior," he said, "a man worthy to be the enemy of a great chief. Were he Hoyoquim he would do as Hoyoquim will do. The white captive would shine like the sun in the lodge of the mightiest chief. She is beyond price. He shall see for himself."

He rose and waved his hand to the group of warriors, two of whom approached. The chief spoke to them in the Wyandot tongue, and they walked toward a lodge of large size that I had noticed near the centre of the village. When they returned they brought Rose Carew with them.

I see now the light that leaped into her eyes when, raising them from the ground, she beheld Winchester and me. A great wave of delight and surprise flowed over her face, and I too felt joy because I was there to behold it. Perhaps she had never expected to look upon a white face again.

"You have come to save me?" she exclaimed, and her tone was imploring.

"We shall save you, Miss Carew, do not fear," I replied, deeply moved by the appeal in her voice. (I asked God to forgive me for the lie. Even as I spoke there was faint hope—in truth, none at all—in my heart that we might rescue her, but how else could I answer the question in that young face?) But I saw her raise her head and look proud defiance at the savages.

She stood there, the beams of the brilliant morning sun falling full upon her figure, her hair flowing in loose waves down her back, her dress torn by the bushes and brambles of her long journey. I felt, gazing upon her, that Black Eagle had told the truth when he said she was beyond price, and as I caught the look then in his

eyes I could have killed him, his guest though I was. But I said to him in even tones, speaking his own language:

"The words of Hoyoquim are the words of wisdom; the maid is in truth beyond price—beyond any price that was ever before paid for a captive. But I will give for her one hundred rifles, such a reward as no chief, however great, has yet received."

"You behold her," replied the chief, "and you know if you were Hoyoquim you would, like Hoyoquim, refuse all ransom."

I shook my head, but at the bottom of my heart I was sure that he spoke the truth. Man is wild and evil where the law runs not, and the mercy of Black Eagle was but the mercy of his kind.

"What does he say?" asked Miss Carew, looking at me with the infinite trust that I deserved so ill.

"It is about the ransom," I replied, again saying the thing that was not, without scruple. "He asks a high price."

"Tell him," she said, "that my family is rich. They will pay him what he asks, however great it may be."

I met Winchester's gaze once more, and my eyes fell before his. He, too, was awaiting the answer to the girl's question.

"I shall neglect nothing, Miss Carew," I said, bowing to her with deep respect.

"And you will take me to my home?"

"I will take you to your home," I continued, repeating the words mechanically.

I would have avoided her look then, but I could not, and again my soul grew sick. And yet her gaze held me, it was so full of faith, of an absolute faith in me, of an unspoken belief that I would do what I was promising to do, when I had no power to keep even the smallest of my pledges. Black Eagle understood all that we said. English was not a strange tongue to

him, but his face was still unspeaking bronze. The girl turned with simple dignity to Winchester.

"And I have you, too, to thank for my rescue," she said.

"Yes," I interrupted. "Mr. Winchester opened the way that I might come here for you."

She told him her gratitude in fit words, but he did not reply, bending down his face, which suddenly had gone pale. The chief spoke again to the attendant warriors, motioning at the same time to the girl to go with them. She made no resistance, but she addressed me once more before returning to the lodge.

"In good truth I might have guessed that it was such a man who would come for me," she said.

I had some pride in my wilderness skill and the reputation that I, in the beginning a man of another kind, had won among the wild borderers, but now it was like the turning of a knife in a fresh wound.

"You will not fail me," she said, the smile of faith overspreading her face.

"I will not fail you," I forced myself to reply, cursing John Lee for the weak liar that I knew he was. Then she was gone, and I was glad that my eyes no more beheld her.

"She does not doubt your promise," said Winchester. I knew that he did not mean to taunt me, the words being involuntary, but they added to the bitterness of my mood. There was even a moment when I felt regret ever to have come upon such a mission.

Black Eagle did not stir, and the silence among us was very long. It was again the chief who at last broke it.

"Lee is troubled or his face does not tell truly the words of his heart," he said, although, with a delicate politeness which perhaps I did not appreciate, he never looked toward me.

"It is true, Black Eagle," I replied. "I have promised the maid that I will take her back to her people,

and I can not do it. If a great chief were to make a pledge and find himself unable to keep it, would not his heart be heavy?"

He nodded assent, and then for the first time let his eyes fall upon me. I thought I saw pity there, and I flushed with a slight feeling of shame that a savage should so regard me.

"You have seen the maid," he said presently, "and you know that neither gold nor rifles are fit to buy her. But there is yet another way, with a price so high that few have ever paid it. I have known none who did so, but it is said that in the ancient and greater days of our race men have been found who were willing."

Curiosity flamed up in my mind, and I tried to divine his meaning, but the bronze repose of his face was unbroken and I could read nothing there. Winchester, too, leaned forward with a sudden increase of interest.

"Speak on, Hoyoquim," I said, adopting his sententious manner. "We listen."

"The chief would refuse all the offers that the hunter could make, except one," said he.

"And that?"

"Yourself."

"Myself!" I cried in amazement.

The cold eyes of the chief glittered.

"Will you become my prisoner in place of the girl?" he said. "Will you give yourself, my great enemy, for her? You have told her that you will send her back to Kain-tuck-ee. A true warrior never lies. How can you keep your promise? Think what it is for Hoyoquim to give up the one who would become the light of his lodge, the captive taken in honourable battle. There is none save Lee for whom he would give her."

Now, I am like other men. I appreciate a decent bit of flattery, but I make the small demand that it be spoken at the right time; moreover, Hoyoquim's proposition was so sudden that I scarce knew how to take it.

"And after the exchange is made?" I asked, speaking upon the spur of the moment.

"Lee shall have a death worthy of a brave man and a great warrior," replied the chief impressively. "There is no torture which he shall not show himself able to endure. When the fire is rising around him and the women of our tribe thrust blazing splinters into his flesh, he shall laugh at them, and calmly sing his death song. When the men taunt him and tell him that he will never see his home again, he shall smile upon them, and over his ashes the Black Eagle and his warriors will say, 'He was a great white chief in death as well as in life, the bravest foe that we have ever known.'"

The look upon my face must have been most rueful. Had Hoyoquim been a white man I should have called his speech irony, but I understood the Indian character, and I knew that he meant to pay me the highest compliment that could enter his mind. I glanced again at Winchester, and I caught a strange expression in his eye. He seemed to say, "Would you—would you dare?" and then the thought came to me—Would I, could I?

I believe it was the questioning look of Winchester that troubled me: it seemed a sort of challenge; without it I should never have permitted such an idea. I reread in an instant the tale of my life as I had lived it so far. I was alone; no father, no mother, no sister, no brother to mourn me—none at all, in truth, save some good comrades of the hunt or the forest battle, and they would quickly find another to take my place. And then, too, that old story would be buried forever. Yet this life was pleasant in spite of all. I was not thirty, and I felt the blood flushing in a full tide through my veins. I knew the secrets of the wilderness which curved around us, and I could find zest there for thirty, forty, or more years yet.

"It is impossible that you should do this thing," said Winchester. "But what a fate for the girl!"

He was thinking, I knew, of that other girl in England.

"And why impossible?" I demanded sharply, rising to my feet. I saw then Rose Carew's face, and another like hers, but older, in distant Kentucky.

He did not answer, but there came back into his eyes the questioning look which was to me a challenge, though far from his intent that it should be such. I hesitated no longer, but turned to the chief.

"Does this forbid escape?" I asked.

"It does not," he replied. "The same chance that was open to the girl is open to you. If it be the will of Manito that you escape, you shall escape."

"I am your prisoner, Black Eagle," I said.

He looked at me gravely for full two minutes, and there was in his eye a momentary gleam that I did not understand. Was it admiration, or pity, or regret? Then he said:

"Lee is a man."

I turned to Winchester.

"Will you do this thing for me?" I asked. "Will you take the girl to Kentucky, holding her as you would the one you have left in England?"

"As God is my witness!" he replied, and he gave my hand the strong English grasp.

"Don't tell her anything about it," I continued. "Say to her that I have gone on a long expedition into the land of the Shawnees, and that you have taken my place. Tell her the ransom was money."

"I will say to her all that you ask," he answered, repeating the grasp, and I knew that he would keep his word, if man could.

"I am at your service, chief," I said to the impassive Black Eagle.

He bowed and led the way to a small hut built of logs. Thus was the bargain made.

CHAPTER XIII

WHITE FACE, BLACK HEART

WINCHESTER left me at the door of the hut, with one last hand clasp, and I troubled myself no more about that part of the bargain. It was never in my mind that Hoyoquim would not keep faith, and the girl could have no more trusted guardian in her flight than the Englishman.

The floor of my prison was the bare earth, on which was spread a buffalo-robe, the sole article that the place contained. I sat upon it in the Indian fashion, and looked up at Black Eagle and the two Wyandot warriors who had come with me there, awaiting their wish. I felt the pangs of hunger, not having eaten for some hours, and I mentioned it to the chief. He sent one of the warriors at once, saying that the white man was his guest and brother, and the choicest afforded by the village should be at my service, or words to that effect, my mind at the moment not dwelling on trifles.

Two Miami maidens—light brown, slender, and graceful—brought me cakes made of the beaten maize, strips of venison, and a slice of buffalo tongue, a delicacy that I had appreciated these many years. They must have been the daughters of a chief, as their moccasins and leggings and deerskin tunics were brilliant with many-coloured beads, and small feathers of red, blue, and yellow glittered in their hair. Whether they felt pity for me I know not, as I could see no expression upon the face of either, yet they were most gentle in their ways.

I ate with hearty appetite. Even in the face of dissolution in its most hideous form my body demanded its due, such was the healthy life I had led. I do not think that the strong man ever appreciates fully the approach of death; his physical senses do not permit the idea. Perhaps this feeling led me into the rash bargain.

I admit, however, that some of my hope was lost when Hoyoquim told me that I must be bound, and again in the telling of this unpleasant fact he sugared it with a compliment. The white hunter had the cunning of the wolf and the strength of the bear; if a hand or a foot were left free even for the width of the narrow hut he would slip from the Indians, though a hundred warriors guarded him. As I have said before, I like compliments; but now whenever Hoyoquim began to pay me one I felt a chill; I knew that it was but the preliminary to another reduction in my chances of life.

Two warriors bound me tightly with thongs of green deerskin, and then Hoyoquim informed me that he would leave me to myself that I might commune with the Great Spirit, as it was the custom of all warriors to make their peace with Manito before going to the happy hunting-grounds. He might have spared me that last allusion, so I thought, but the suggestion of a taunt was far from the chief's mind.

They went away, and when I was alone in the hut, chained upon the bosom of Mother Earth, I missed his grim politeness. My courage declined still further. I could not account for this sudden blotting out of hope; but when a man who has hunted all the way from the head waters of the Ohio to those of the Mississippi and then back again finds himself limited to an orbit of six inches, he understands that his life has undergone a mighty change.

It was only a hut of the Indian fashion in which I lay, strong enough to hold a prisoner, but with wide

chinks between the logs, through which the winds of heaven blew as they wished. They brought upon their breath the odour of summer flowers and tales of the great, free world outside, through which I had roamed in thoughtless content. Ah, how I wished to be there again! I did not want to die, and it was a bitter thought to me then that perhaps when my old comrades heard of it some of them would say, "He was a fool for doing it, and he deserved his death." If we have to leave life we wish to leave it gracefully and with honour.

I lay there a long time. The varied sounds of the village came through the chinks to my ear and the winds still blew, bringing with them that note which now had become taunting. I heard after a while a light step, and looking up, beheld a white man.

There are among us of the West certain creatures with a white skin and the shape of men who have the soul of neither the red nor the white; in truth, I know not whether they have a soul at all; perhaps they are possessed of a devil which drives them to the commission of all manner of crimes surpassing those of either race with which they have so often come into conflict. Their names are spoken among us with horror, and their deaths are matter for public rejoicing. These are the renegades, men of white birth belonging to the superior breed who have taken abode with the savages, fighting against their own kind, and practising every foul snare and treasonable stratagem.

It was the worst of them all—Moses Blackstaffe—who was now before me, a man who had achieved great power among the Northwestern tribes, because his cunning intellect brought to them many a triumph and much spoil.

He was of most hateful presence, short, broad-faced, almost as dark as an Indian, with stringy black locks, cruel eyes set close together, and sensuous lips.

He folded his arms across his breast and gazed at

me awhile without speech. We were not strangers. Twice had I looked upon his face in forest ambush, and thrice at the British fort. Twice had I taken from his hands prisoners—once a girl destined for his lodge, as Rose Carew was destined for the wigwam of Black Eagle. I knew that he remembered it now as he gazed at me lying there helpless, and even had he been prone to forgetfulness I should have reminded him. One can not live so long in the Indian fashion without acquiring a touch of the Indian manner.

"I salute you, Mr. Blackstaffe," I said. "I did not expect to meet the worst villain outside of hell, but it gives me opportunity for pleasant conversation. Do you remember that fight on the Muskingum when you fled from me? But I knew before then that you were a coward. Do you remember that time two years ago when I took from you the girl whom you had chosen as your share of the spoil? She is happy now with the white people, her own people; I saw her last summer, and she asked me if the dog Blackstaffe still lived. I told her yes, but that he would yet meet the death of the dog he was!"

For answer he spat full in my face, and I saw the red flushing under the brown of his cheeks. I continued to look at him with the scorn that was burning in me.

"You speak big words for a man in your position," he said.

"I am here in this hut, bound to this spot of earth, by my own free will and choice. If I die, it is a death that I could have avoided, and there will never be a day when such a thing can be said of you, Blackstaffe. That you know!"

I felt for the first time a thrill of exultation. I believed myself so superior to him that in comparison I seemed a very good man. I trust that the emotion was human.

He flushed again under his brown skin, but in a moment resumed his self-command and said dryly:

"No, I have more sense."

I did not reply, and closed my eyes, as if I were weary and would be rid of his presence.

"If it is any pleasure to you to know your prospects," he continued, "I tell you that you are to run the gantlet, and then you will be burned at the stake."

I gave him no answer, and presently he went away, without further ado, and as his shadow became less in the hut I rejoiced greatly thereat, hating the sight of his evil face and the sound of his cruel words.

The chief unbound me about noon and the Indian maids again brought me food. I stretched my muscles, and felt the blood still flowing full and warm in my veins. When I had finished my farewell repast the girls withdrew, and I was left again to lonely thought. The night came presently, and with it a chill that reached my marrow. Hope blazes up in the sunshine, but sinks in the shadow. My chance of escape seemed to dwindle. I was now in the hands of a most cunning foe, and as my life suddenly shortened, the living of it seemed the sweeter. Yet mine in truth had been a most wretched career, now about to end obscurely in the wilderness, and the manner of its ending stirred me to anger. I should be repaid, I thought, for some things that I had suffered, and it was a hope always in my heart until this moment, when it died with other hopes.

But I did not permit such sad thoughts to go far, attuning my mind to a better frame, and seeking sleep with such good result that when I awoke again the morning sun was creeping under the mat that hung over the door.

CHAPTER XIV

AN UNEXPECTED OFFER

THE mat was lifted after awhile, and Little Turtle himself, the head chief of the allied tribes, a man of strong countenance, stood before me. Now I knew that it was he and not Hoyoquim with whom I would have to deal.

Mechecunnaqua was dressed with great splendour, his tunic, leggings, moccasins, and head-dress being of the finest Indian make, vivid with many-coloured beads and small feathers of brilliant hue. But his chief garment was a great robe which he wrapped about his person, much as a general infolds himself and his dignity in a military cloak. It was not a blanket such as most Indian chiefs of this region wore, but a robe made of the skin of a young buffalo bull, like the kind affected by the chiefs of the plains Indians, with the soft, silky hair left on and turned outward, the inside decorated beautifully with porcupine quills in such fashion that the setting of the quills depicted the most famous battles and single combats in the life of Mechecunnaqua. It was a splendid garment, but Mechecunnaqua was a splendid man of the Indian type, and he had won most worthily the right to wear it. He took presently from the recesses of his clothing a tiny medicine bag, made of brilliantly dyed beaver-skin such as warriors of the Western tribes carry, passed it before his face two or three times, and then returned it to its concealment.

"What is your wish, Mechecunnaqua?" I asked.

"To talk to you of many things," he replied.

"Proceed."

"Lee is a great warrior," he said, "and his name fills our ears. I, Mechecunnaqua, know that fame does not lie. The war-cry of Lee is as terrible as Annemeckee." *

Now, I had no war-cry at all, but it was merely his way of paying me a compliment, and it would have been poor courtesy to refuse it. So I said, adopting his tone:

"Proceed. In the presence of Mechecunnaqua, Lee is but Pahpukkeena † staring at Gheezis." ‡

"Lee, though our enemy, did not come to take our country or slay our warriors," he continued. "When the moon hangs over the forest and the wind breathes from the south the Indian hunter, too, seeks his mate. I know not all the ways of men nor the will of Manito, but I suspect that the heart of the white hunter is like that of the red. He, too, would seek the face that he loves, and when he goes upon such an errand labours and dangers become a little thing. Even so has Lee come into the lodges of the Miamis because a white girl's face has led him on. Now the heart of Mechecunnaqua turns toward Lee. It is the will of Manito. Listen, the white girl is not yet gone from our village, but at the noon hour she starts, if Lee does not say the words that are sweet in my ear."

"Proceed, O Mechecunnaqua!"

"You are a prisoner, and nothing can save you from the stake but the words that please me, and which you alone can speak. You love the white maid. Become a Miami, and she is yours. Even more, you shall be a chief among the Miamis second only to Mechecunnaqua. I, Mechecunnaqua, say it. Forget the ways of the white man. Remember the Long Knives only to fight against them. The woods from the mountains to the great

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* Thunder. † The grasshopper. ‡ The sun.

Father of Waters and beyond shall be yours. If the white maid does not please you long, then you shall have your choice among the red. You shall be adopted into the tribe as my son, and when I grow gray and my eyes fail and Manito calls me away, then you shall be head chief in my place."

The chief paused a moment, but before I could speak resumed the thread of his discourse:

"Lee knows both the ways of the white man and the red," he said, "and his wisdom will aid us in driving the Long Knives back over the mountains. Then our hunting-grounds shall remain such forever. The Western tribes—the Miamis, the Shawnees, the Wyandots, the Ottawas, the Pottawatomies, the Sacs, the Foxes, and all the others most warlike—shall form a league like that of the Iroquois in the East, but more numerous and of much greater power, of which Lee shall be some day the chief, even as the Yengees,* call it in their language, the king. And we shall have, too, the help of the Yengees. We have an old and very wise man, Kahgagee.† Many moons have whitened his head; he fought long ago in the wars between Onontio ‡ and Corlear;* now he does not wield Dayanoaqua || or Osquesont,^ but his heart still throbs at the beat of the war drum, and he would send his children, the warriors, to battle. Just before Behmagat ◊ began to dry in the chill autumn winds he went in Cheemaun ⇕ to Canada to talk with the big white chief in the red coat,↕ and Keewaydin ⇞ has not yet brought him back again; but when he comes he will bring news that the Yengees will help us against the Long Knives."

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* English.

† The raven.

‡ The French Governor General of Canada.

* The British Governor of the Province of New York.

‖ The scalping knife.

^ The tomahawk.

◊ The grape-vine.

⇕ A birch-bark canoe.

↕ The British Governor General of Canada.

⇞ The home wind.

I doubted the accuracy of this statement, not his belief in it, but it was not for me to say him nay at that moment.

"Your offer is that of a noble spirit, Mechecunnaqua," I said, "and in its way is greatly beyond my desert, yet I must cling to my own kind. But I tell you truly, Mechecunnaqua, and to your face, I could wish that God had made us brethren in race."

"Even so could I," he replied, "but my heart is sad because Lee will not listen to my words, and a wind of Peboan * blows between us. And yet it would have been heavier still had I not spoken. Farewell, Lee."

"Farewell, Mechecunnaqua."

He lifted the mat that hung over the door of the hut and went out, his footfalls making no sound. I was left a prey to mingled feelings. My own race had cast me off. Then why should I not take the great reward that he offered and join his? I thank God that I never looked at this question with serious intent, but merely as a vague and curious thing that passed before my mind.

I had once more a fine opportunity, lasting two or three hours, to commune with my own unpleasant thoughts, and at the end of that time the mat was raised again, and a figure entered. It was that of Rose Carew. I motioned her to the wolfskin. I shall not tell how glad I was to see her, but I affected an easy and careless air.

"It is little that I may offer you, Miss Carew," I said, "but I do the best I can. This castle of mine lacks furniture."

It was poor gallantry, but I scarce knew what to say, and she did not reply, looking for the moment beyond me and over my head as if she had some purpose in mind. I was surprised, too, to find that she had not gone, and I said so.

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* Winter.

"The Wyandot chief is a man of his word, and Little Turtle, who now supersedes him here, would not break any promise that Hoyoquim had made. Why have not you and the Englishman started for the South?" I asked.

"There is no breaking of faith," she replied, "and we linger at my request. Why are you held here a prisoner, Mr. Lee?"

She was looking at me with strange eyes, and I felt a sudden fear, but I answered:

"It is an old matter, Miss Carew—a quarrel between Hoyoquim and myself, but it amounts to little. I am a sort of hostage, and I shall be released in a week or two."

"And when you are released you will come back to Kentucky?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," I replied, but I knew then that she did not believe me.

"The chief, Little Turtle, let me see you," she said. "It was a favour that I asked, and he was willing to grant it, as you behold. I know, Mr. Lee, that you are in truth held as a hostage, but not as one who is to be released. I know the real reason why you are here. Do you think that I can accept such a sacrifice? Do you think that I could have any peace hereafter if I did? I am not willing to buy my life at the price of another's!"

She stood up before me straight and tall, her cheeks flushing a deep red with nervous excitement, and her eyes full of fire.

"It is too late," I said, "to make any change. "What has been done has been done, and perhaps you are mistaken."

"I am not mistaken."

"Then if one should grant that you are right, which I do not, what purpose could you serve by refusing the offer? You would but destroy yourself and help nobody

else. You must go. You have a father and mother waiting for you. Have they no claims upon you? I saw that mother and her face of misery, and I promised to send you back. And what am I? There is nobody of my blood to grieve for me. If I don't die here I might fall the next day in battle with some wild beast or wilder man. It is but the risk that we of the forest take."

"But I can not have you die for me," she exclaimed.

"I shall not die for anybody," I said, and I laughed with a simulation of indifference. "Even if the Indians do not release me I shall be rescued. A friend of mine, the most skilful woodsman in the world, is out there in the forest. He comes and goes when he pleases, he is an Indian himself; he will reach me here in the night, and we shall go away together."

She put her face in her hands and was silent for awhile. I too was silent, watching her. I felt a deep pity for her, torn as she was by conflicting emotions. She raised her face presently and it was pale now, but there was a strange fire in her eyes.

"The chief, Little Turtle, has spoken to me," she said, "and he has told me perhaps more than you know. Did he not make you some kind of an offer?"

"I do not recall any," I said, although I did full well.

"Perhaps he forgot it when he spoke to you," she said, "but he mentioned it to me, and it may be that there is a way for you to save your life."

Her gaze now met mine directly, and that strange fire was still in her eyes. I felt a sudden quiver in the blood and a thought shot through my head like lightning. But that inward voice said, "Who are you and what are you, John Lee, to dream of such a thing?" The hope that had flamed up so suddenly died.

"I can not think of any way but the one way," I said, "and that is for my trusty comrade to come for me."

"I did not mean that," she said. "Is there no other?"

"None."

Her cheeks became red again, but the fire did not go from her eyes. Nor did she take her gaze from me.

"Think, and think well, if there is not another way," she said.

I had admired her from the first—her beauty, her strength, her mind, and all her womanly qualities—and now I admired her more than ever. Truly, she was worth winning by any man, and it was well that I was able to send her back to her own race. Then that persistent thought came to me again. Life could be pleasant. But I crushed it once more, and said for the second time:

"No, I can not think of any other way."

Her face became white again.

"Who are you and what are you?" she asked, "and why should you do this thing for me?"

"I am but a wilderness hunter," I replied, "and there are many others like me. Death—although I do not care to die for many years—does not seem terrible to us, as it is always by our side, and we grow familiar with it. What I do is from choice, and because it is the first chance that I have had in a long time to be of real service to any one. You would not deny me the pleasure of such a feeling, would you?"

I laughed lightly, pretending to indifference, but I saw a mist appear in her eyes.

"But think," she said, "to die here in this vast wilderness at the hands of savages!"

"It is not to happen," I said; "and even if it should happen, remember it is but the fate which in any event is sure to overtake me some day."

"And you will stay? Nothing can change your mind?"

"Nothing. I shall stay until Osseo comes for me,

which I do not think will be long, and then he and I shall go together into the wilderness again, and you shall return to civilization unharmed. Winchester will take you safely. I know it. Believe in him."

"I will go," she said. Then, stooping suddenly, her face aflame, she kissed me on the forehead and rushed from the lodge.

I will not deny that I felt regrets when she was gone, but I was marked with one deep scar, and I did not wish another. My own conscience gave me approval, however great was the weakness of the flesh, and it was very weak.

It seemed that Little Turtle now had no wish to treat me ill before my time, and shortly he gave me food in abundance, in wooden or earthenware bowls, and consisting of dried buffalo meat, fresh venison, corn cakes, a sort of pudding made of roots and succulent to the taste, and wild plums. It was all very good, and I can not say that its character as a farewell feast given before sending me into the Supreme Presence interfered with my enjoyment of it, so I ate with slowness and dignity.

As I sat there I thought of Rose Carew returning to Kentucky. I was sending her back to Jasper. I had not thought of that when I made the sacrifice, but I was glad, nevertheless, that I had helped her to escape. Yet I could not keep from my mind the picture of her as Jasper's wife and Jasper and her father again planning great schemes for their advancement in the West. St. Clair had been beaten and the Northwest was not yet to be divided, but Mr. Carew's fertile mind would form fresh plans. He and Jasper and Knowlton would speedily be plotting something else, and perhaps it would not be so innocent as the acquisition of new land. The wish to know added to my wish to live.

At times they left the door of my prison open, and I could see much that passed in the village. Warriors had

been coming continually, bringing some fresh trophy, or if too late to have a part in the battle and pursuit, to share in the triumphal songs and dances.

One of these parties arrived as I was looking forth, and the squaws welcomed the warriors with the chant of triumph. I was about to turn my face away, finding no joy in the spectacle of Indians coming with the scalps of my own people, when I noticed that the song was for a prisoner and not a scalp; and then, when I looked again, I saw that the prisoner was my cousin Jasper, wounded in the shoulder, his clothes torn and his face pallid.

The hurt did not seem to be serious, but his situation was, and the lack of colour in his face showed clearly that he knew it. I had much cause to dislike Jasper, but at this moment I felt only pity for him, knowing what would be the fate of a white man taken by the savages. I wondered, too, that they had spared him so long, as he must have been captured while near Fort Jefferson, and that was two days' journey away.

They hurried him by me, and he passed so near that I could have touched him with my hand. Then they carried him on to one of the wigwams, in which he was imprisoned. His ambitions, I thought, were to end like mine, and as badly. Rose Carew was to be for neither of us.

The afternoon and night passed without event and another day of my captivity came—a day that found me wondering at the delay of my fate. The door of my hut, closed at night, was opened again in the morning to admit the fresh air, which, however, was not wholly a blessing, as it brought with it stronger recollections of the freedom that was lost.

A strange and faint but musical note entered the lodge.

It was the sound of a flute, scarce higher than that of a gentle wind, but I could not mistake it. I smiled in

momentary amusement. De Chamillard the "madman!" Then I silently begged the forgiveness of the gallant Frenchman. Until that moment I had completely forgotten his existence.

The voice of the flute playing a plaintive old French air grew louder, and I smiled again. Now that I had no use for him and his flute, I regarded his continued appearance in the rôle of a madman as a childish act; once was well enough, twice was folly. Then I knew that I had wronged him. De Chamillard might be eccentric, but he was not a fool; perhaps it was curiosity that brought him back to the Miami village. His music did not cease, but steadily growing louder, changed from the pathetic to the gay, and at last De Chamillard played his cheerful air directly before the door of my prison. I could see him as he stood there, facing the warrior on guard. He played the tune to the end, waved the man aside, and entered. He stared at me a moment, put the flute to his mouth again, played another short tune, and then said:

"Do you think that I am really insane, my dear Lee? I merely do this to maintain the character which chance gave to me. The warrior outside has that opinion, and he did not dare to resist my entrance here, lest his Manito should strike him down with a bolt of lightning. I came to tell you, Monsieur Lee, that Monsieur Winchester and the girl have gone southward, but your friends who are left, and particularly the red gentleman who calls himself the son of the evening star, are alert, and are determined that your captivity shall not be of long duration."

"I am grateful to you, De Chamillard," I replied. "I have played double and quits with death before, and I do not give up hope now, especially while you and Winchester and Osseo are free to help me."

"I thank you for your confidence in me, *nom du chien,* I do," he said with much dignity, "but I am only

an amateur in this wilderness life, and I think you shall owe me merely for good wishes and not much for material help."

Then he took his flute and cheerful countenance from the wigwam, and presently I heard the notes of music in the village—dying soon, however—and I imagined from the circumstances that De Chamillard was wandering into the forest once more.

Again the mat before the door of my prison was lifted, and now the amazing spectacle that greeted my eyes was my cousin Jasper walking with the renegades, Blackstaffe and the still more famous Simon Girty, much of the colour returned to his face, and his manner suggestive of liberty and relief from fear.

"The Long Knife whom we took near the fort," said Little Turtle, who visited me again, "has had a message from Manito, and it tells him to join the red men, as Girty and Blackstaffe have done, and fight against the white men who have come to take from us the country which is ours. He is adopted into the tribe of the Miamis, and presently he shall go upon the war path with us."

And so my good cousin had become a renegade to save himself from the torture! Perhaps, too, there was something in the man that would reconcile him to such a life. All the pity I had felt for him the day before went away, and in its place came contempt. It should be known that on the border we always hated the renegades more than the Indians. In a bitter spirit but in silence I wished Jasper in his change of life the luck that he deserved.

Thus the time passed.

CHAPTER XV

A "MADMAN'S" IDEA

THE silence and loneliness of my prison were soon broken by the sound of De Chamillard's flute, and observing that its note was of an unusual, even excessively gay, character, I was compelled again to smile to myself. The Frenchman undoubtedly had a happy temperament, and that is not a possession to be despised. I heard his music alternating with song for nearly an hour, as if he were entertaining the savages, and then when the twilight had begun to come he appeared at my door, and, as before, pushing aside the sentinel in such manner that one would have thought the world his private property, he entered, letting the mat drop behind him until it covered all the door.

"Quick, Monsieur Lee!" he said, "bind me and take my clothes!"

As he spoke he cut my thongs.

"What do you mean?" I asked in surprise.

"After all," he replied gayly, "you do not have every clever idea. It is I who have one now and then. Do you not see? I am mad, wisely mad. It was your suggestion at first, and now I complete the plan. I am mad and the savages will not harm me, no matter what I do or what is done to me. Quickly bind me, take my flute, put on my clothes, pull your hair about your face as mine is, and go forth to freedom! *nom du chien,* do not delay! The night is coming and your features will be hidden. I shall rejoin you and the others when the savages release me."

"I will do it," I cried, struck by his idea, "but before God I swear, De Chamillard, that if the Indians hold you, I shall return and yield myself in your place! Little Turtle, the head chief, is in a way my friend, and he will see that justice is done."

"I have no fear, Monsieur Lee. But hasten! Opportunity, like a lady, is coy, and once refused, will not come again."

He had divested himself of his outer clothing already, and as we proceeded with our talk he blew an occasional note on the flute in order to maintain the illusion to the warrior at the door. The task was done in two or three minutes. De Chamillard, his arms bound behind him with the cords that he had taken from mine, lay placidly on the wolfskin, and I, flute in hand, paused a moment, unable to express to this gallant gentleman the deep gratitude that I felt. He saw my lips move, and he guessed what I would say, or at least its meaning.

"Let it wait! I understand," he said. "Can you blow a few notes on that flute?"

I nodded. I had learned a little of this art, too, from the French officers with whom I served in our Revolution, although I did not have, like De Chamillard, a real talent for the music. But I stepped boldly out of the hut, thankful now that a forest life had compelled close observation of the minutest details about me as I was able to imitate De Chamillard's walk and even his gestures. I blew a few stray notes from the flute and wandered off toward the centre of the village, the warrior on guard scarce giving me a second glance as I passed, so sure was he that I was the madman.

Our most reckless moments usually occur when we have passed half a danger triumphantly, and now one of those impulses from which I had suffered sometimes in my earlier youth seized me. I felt for the moment a sense of recklessness, and I invited attention rather than shunned it, so confident was I that my rôle as a

madman would serve better than my disguise as an Indian, and carry me out of the village and into safety.

I blew a wicked tune or two upon the flute—I call them wicked because they deserve no other name—and danced a few steps in imitation of De Chamillard's French gavottes.

These maiden efforts were received with admiring glances, chiefly from the squaws and papooses, whose experience of music and the dance, as practised by the civilized nations, was not great. It was easy to see that De Chamillard in his two or three visits to the village had become a character of high privilege, and I was not willing that his reputation should suffer at my hands; therefore I put as much heart as I could into the notes of the flute and the quickstep. My curving course brought me soon into the presence of the three renegades, whom I met walking among the wigwams and conversing with deep earnestness. It was natural that these men, like ill-omened fowls, should cling together. The fall of the dusk was now so great that they could not distinguish my features even had suspicion incited them to a close look, and when I, stopping in front of them, blew a few notes on the flute, Blackstaffe said:

"That madman again. If it were not for the foolish superstition of the Indians I'd have him burned at the stake."

"Wherein you show that you are not a statesman, Blackstaffe," commented Girty reprovingly, "and also wherein you are likely to limit your power among the tribes. Now, I have no objection myself to seeing a man burned at the stake, but it is not worth while to go to so much trouble without a purpose. Besides, you ought not even to ridicule the popular beliefs of the Indians; that is a thing concerning which a people is always most sensitive. Float with the stream, Blackstaffe, or you'll be sure to strike a snag and sink."

I knew that Girty was right, and I understood why

he had risen to such power among the savages, but I did not linger over his words, the reckless impulse that had taken possession of me bearing me on. I seized Blackstaffe's hand in mine and gazed at the lines in the palm with all the intentness of a sorceress.

"The white Indian," I said, in as wild a tone as I could assume, "is a man of great passions and quick temper. Manito so made him and he can not help it. Once he lived far to the East and another white man crossed him in some darling wish; but he slew that man, and when the friends of him who had fallen came to hang him he fled to the forest and the red man for refuge."

"Damnation!" cried Blackstaffe, snatching his hand away. I knew a little of the wretch's history, and the story that I told was the truth, not mere guess-work. Girty laughed with malicious enjoyment.

"Let him go on," he said. "He has made a chance hit at your past, Blackstaffe; now let us see what he will say about your future."

This emboldened me still further, and I seized Blackstaffe's hand again.

"Your future is doubtful. *Ma foi,* but it is," I said. "You have another darling wish, and more than one opposes you in it. You are a brave man—*un brav homme!* but they fight you with treachery. I see death, whether yours or theirs I can not tell. But if you fall it will be the fall of a very brave man—*un tres brav homme.*"

"What is that you say?" he cried angrily. "I have enemies, treacherous enemies? Who are they?"

He looked suspiciously at Girty and Jasper.

I shook my head.

"That I know not," I replied. "The God of the white man and the Manito of the red man both hide it from me."

"At least you have an equal chance, Blackstaffe," said Girty, laughing again. "He tells you that some

one is to fall, but he does not say whether it is to be you or an enemy. Therefore the question is still open."

"But the man guesses too well," said Blackstaffe, whom my truthful narration of his beginnings in the greater wickedness seemed to have impressed deeply. "Perhaps the insane can see into the future sometimes."

"Now, that doesn't look unreasonable," said Girty thoughtfully. "They say that Nature always gives compensations, and as she has made the mind of this man weaker than those of other men, perhaps she has given to him something that she denies to us. Still, it has never been proved and I doubt it.—Now, Mr. Madman, what fate do you assign to me?"

"You," I replied, "shall live to see the power of your friends destroyed and your own fate none shall know."

This was by intent an ambiguous answer, and yet it was a true prediction, a guess that chance carried to its mark. But Girty did not dream of its truth, merely seeing the doubtful nature of my reply, and he said again, laughing as if I and all my prophecies were a jest:

"You are a cautious witch doctor, my friend, and I don't blame you; in your business I should think that a madman would fare better than the sane.—Ah, Mechecunnaqua, we merely jest with the mad Frenchman who has come among us."

"It is not well to jest at those whom Manito has in his special care," said Little Turtle gravely. He had approached unnoticed while we were talking.

"I used the wrong word when I said 'jest,'" added Girty, correcting himself hastily. "The madman was telling what the future had in store for us, and we listened to him with interest."

"I know not whether the mad can tell what our lives shall be next year or the year after," said Little Turtle, "but wherever the mad may be, and in whatever guise

they come, they are the beloved children of Manito, and the red man would not lay hands upon them."

I started in surprise and apprehension at his significant tone. The eyes of Mechecunnaqua could reach to the bottom of a well: had they pierced my disguise? He stood there, calm without emotion, the bronze of his face as expressionless as that metal itself. I laughed, whistled a bar or two of some backwoods tune, and then, putting the flute to my lips, lounged toward the outskirts of the village. None followed me, but I needed no inward monitor now to tell me I should hurry. Yet I could not hasten toward the forest in a straight line like an arrow from the bow lest I arouse suspicion in the minds of these ever-suspicious children of the wilderness, and I lingered to blow an occasional note on the flute or to stare vacantly about me. It was thus that I was passing the last fringe of wigwams, when a warrior who brushed past me said in my ear:

"When Lee reaches the forest let him go straight toward the point where the sun last showed itself before going behind the earth. When he has gone about ten miles he will come to a little lake. Let him wait there."

I started at the sound of the name Lee, but in a moment I was reassured, knowing the voice to be that of Osseo. I turned to speak to him, but he was gone in the darkness, disappearing as silently and completely as if he had been but a shadow himself.

I entered a melon field, and there I paused to look back at the village now almost in darkness, as the only light of an Indian town at night is the moon, if that be shining; otherwise none. My venture into the place had been a success, and I felt that I had kept my promise to the sick woman in Kentucky.

No one disturbed me; even the prowling curs passed me by without notice, and thus I entered the forest. Following Osseo's directions, I arrived at the tiny lake, just a bowl of water set in a rim of hills, and soon Osseo

came to me there, bringing with him also arms for my use.

"The English trader and the girl have gone southward on a course that I chose for them, and we may overtake them before to-morrow's sunset," he said.

"Then come on, Osseo," I said, flushed with triumph, and not willing to delay a moment.

He did not say me nay, and we started with great speed upon the indicated path.

CHAPTER XVI

AUTUMN'S LAST GLORY

Our way led through the wilderness, where oak and beech and hickory grew in dense clusters, the space below their boughs now filled with twining thickets, through which we forced our way, now open like the aisles of a park, where we trod a carpet of turf with naught to hold us back. Modest little flowers of pink or purple, blooming late, peeped above the grass or snuggled between the roots of the trees. We leaped the brooks of running water, and when we came to a creek too deep for wading or jumping we swam it with swift strokes, holding our rifles and ammunition in one hand above our heads. Once we disturbed a deer with mighty antlers who crashed through the thickets, and at the crossing of the creek the beaver dived from their new house in the stream into the deep waters.

It was the mighty wilderness as the first white man found it, a country of great forests and little prairies, with the fiercest foe that our race ever encountered lurking in its depths.

There is no finer region on the globe, and I knew that it was destined in the next century to be the seat of many cities and a great population, but I felt a regret that the forest and its true inmates should ever go. I think it will be a dreary world when all of it is known and measured by the land surveyors, and there is no place left where man may hunt the wild deer and perhaps be hunted by wilder man.

These were but fleeting impressions, the vague thoughts of a moment, and we never ceased our race to the south. Osseo was beside me, stride for stride, the earth giving back no sound as his moccasins touched it, the leaves and bushes silent too as he passed through them. How he did it was his secret, and sometimes I used to think that the forest contained no mystery for him. He read all its signs and understood all its tongues.

We came in the afternoon to a little glade, in the centre of which lay some charred pieces of wood. Here was where the Englishman and the girl had camped the night before, and we stopped but a moment, following swiftly upon the traces of their footsteps.

The sun was now dropping down in the west, and touching the edge of the forest with a glow of red gold. Presently we saw a thin dark line like a thread appear against the horizon, and Osseo's white, even teeth showed in a smile.

"See, the trader signals to all the wilderness that he is here," said he. "Verily, the children of the cities are as babes when they come into the woods, and the white learns wisdom but slowly from his teacher, the red man."

We reached in fifteen minutes the little glade in which Winchester had made the camp. I must give him the credit of good selection, as he had chosen a spot in the lee of a hill, sheltered, moreover, by the trunk and roots of a large and half-fallen beech tree. Here he had scraped up a heap of leaves, evidently intended for the girl's resting-place in the night, and now he was bent over the fire, cooking some venison, his honest red face glowing with the heat. The girl sat on a log near by, resting from the long journey. Yet she seemed cheerful, and her face was not so pale as it was when I beheld her in captivity.

"Listen! she is talking of Lee," whispered Osseo, putting his hand on my arm.

"You said to me that Mr. Lee would escape, that his Indian comrade would rescue him; how do you know this?" she asked.

Winchester's red face grew redder.

"No one can be sure of the future," he said, "but this I think will come true."

I knew that Winchester did not expect it to come true.

She said nothing, but looked sadly into the coals, and I felt a strange pleasure to see melancholy in her eyes.

"Come, let's join them," I said to Osseo.

We walked silently into the glade, and they did not see us until we were very near. Then both sprang to their feet, the girl with a cry of fright, the face of Osseo the Indian first meeting her eyes, and Winchester with an exclamation of surprise and confusion because he had not seen our approach sooner. Miss Carew turned her wide bright eyes upon me, and a deep flush swept over her face. I could read her thoughts as clearly as if she had told them herself. She remembered first what she had said back there in my prison lodge, but the flush gave way in a moment to a look of glad surprise. She held out both her hands, and as I took them I felt a supreme content.

She said but little, but I knew that her joy was great, not because I was John Lee, but because she could never have been happy knowing that another had suffered to save her. Then I introduced Osseo as my best and most skilful friend, and she gave him, too, both her hands while he looked his admiration.

My attention was arrested a moment later by a splutter of indignation from Winchester. Osseo was kicking apart the sticks of his fire and trampling upon the coals. Nor did he stop until the last of them ceased to smoke.

"It is necessary," I said to Winchester.

"Why so?" asked Miss Carew.

"The forest is haunted," I replied.

"I know," she said, and she shuddered. Truly she knew.

"I beg your pardon for forgetting," said Winchester to me a little later, "but I thought that we had come far enough to escape pursuit."

"So we have, I think," I replied, "but in the wilderness one can never omit caution."

Ours was a most cheerful party despite our lack of a camp fire and the knowledge that danger still hung on our skirts. We made for Miss Carew a bed of leaves and soft boughs under the sheltering foliage of the largest tree, and then we induced her to wrap herself in the blanket that Winchester carried and go to sleep there. It required but little persuasion, as she was weary, and, moreover, she was fast learning the discipline of the wilderness. In a short time we heard her regular breathing, and we knew that she slept. As for ourselves, we watched by turns, and I stood guard near the morning hour. I was restless, but my nervousness came from neither fear nor sorrow. A strange satisfaction took hold of me, and when I looked at the sleeping form of the girl I felt that I had done a good deed. None of us can afford to despise the memory of such a thing.

We rose at daylight, and, having eaten a little dried venison, resumed our flight, curving in a wide semicircle toward the northwest, as we knew better than to travel straight toward Fort Jefferson, with the chance of being caught on the way by war parties, which were certainly between us and the fort. We preferred a long road around to the short and dangerous path.

We adopted under the guidance of Osseo many cunning devices to hide the traces of our flight from a pursuing enemy, such as wading for long distances on the pebbly bottoms of brooks; stepping now and then from one fallen tree to another, which often in the great

Northwestern woods are spread thickly thus for miles, and again walking where the fallen leaves lay in dense showers of russet brown. So we travelled, and we neither saw danger before us nor heard the sound of it behind us. Swiftly my fear of a recapture in which the girl might be included passed. We were three men with her, all strong and alert, and at least two of us adept in forest lore. Fortune, in truth, would be a most fickle jade if she did not serve us now.

It seemed that Fortune, instead of being fickle, had become most kind. The wilderness, its treacheries stilled, lay at peace, and over it hung the glory of Indian summer's last days. But little snow had fallen where we trod, and the forest was yet red and yellow and brown, and every colour grew deeper in the clear gold of the late sunshine. We walked on the brown carpet of leaves, and the air that blew in our faces was tonic in its freshness.

I watched Miss Carew curiously, and I saw the influence of the wilderness peace fall upon her. She was a child of the East caught suddenly in forest dangers, and yet she showed all the border courage and endurance. Rescued from the worst of fates, her spirits rebounded, and she became the gayest of forest maids. She deemed all danger past now that her eyes saw none. The colours of the woods were too intense, the world was too beautiful for foes to be lurking there, and she was the brightest of creatures, talking of many things, asking us of our own lives, and now and then humming to herself little songs, the familiar notes of which after all these years gave me a deep and painful thrill. She was a constant wonder to us; her variable moods, though never a bad one among them, her deep interest in all things around her, and her good fellowship, kept us watching to see what phase of character she would show next. Once she said to me:

"This wilderness is beautiful now, but I have known

that it can become terrible." She looked around at the glowing forest, but at that moment its vivid hues did not appeal to her. Instead, I saw her shudder.

"Why should one choose to live in it?" she asked. "I can understand why white men as wild as the Indians, men who know nothing of civilized life, should come here and roam the woods far away from the things that we value most, and exposed every moment of their lives to the danger of a cruel death. But you? You are different."

She was looking straight at me, and there was the old inquiry, even curiosity in her gaze. I was startled a little, but replied:

"And how am I different, Miss Carew?"

"Your speech, your manner, are those of an educated man; they are habits that you can not discard. You have not passed all your life here. Does shooting wild animals and fighting savages gratify your whole ambition?"

A glow appeared on her face as she asked me these questions, and her look became eager. She had touched again that old chord in my nature, and I was surprised to find how it vibrated. The ancient memories came back, fresh and strong. But I would not allow them place. I closed my mind again to that part of my life, and lied to her, deliberately lied, with that earnest young face before me.

"In truth, Miss Carew," I said, "you give me credit for what I never had, and you make me more than I am. I am but a plain hunter, not without some skill in the trade, I hope, nor wholly lacking in knowledge of the white man's and red man's tricks. I know that I can never equal Osseo there in forest lore, because he was born to it, but I am willing to match myself against anybody of my race that I know."

She sighed gently, why I was not sure, and I continued:

"And you wrong the wilderness, too, Miss Carew. It has its delights, attractions that can not be found elsewhere. Think of its freedom. I may roam my own master from the Alleghanies to the Pacific, a matter of three thousand miles, and in all that space there is not a foot of land fenced and shut off by the white man from his kind, nor is there any day's march in it in which my rifle will not find me all the food I need. There are wolves on the way, it is true, but they are not wolves in sheep's clothing."

"It may be well enough for men," she said, "but not for women."

I would not dispute with her upon that point; in truth, I agreed with her fully, and she herself at that very moment was an example; yet she seemed in a few moments to forget what she had said, as if it were a mere fleeting emotion, and again she became the forest sprite.

It pleased her for awhile to consider herself a queen, us three her subjects, and the forest her kingdom, which latter was so contrary to the truth that her fancy gave me a curious pleasure. Yet we were most willing subjects, obeying all her little commands with a zest and quickness that drew high approval from her Majesty. Once she plucked a little purple wild flower in late bloom, and asked me to wear it in my cap. I had thought my time for such youthful folly long past, but I put it in the cap and wore it all that day, though Osseo said to me when none other could hear:

"Beware, Lee! A little maid may blind the eyes of a great chief."

His words sank deep in my mind. Now the joy that I found in her presence was uneasy because I knew that it must soon cease. I was troubled, too, by a sense of wrong, because I was not what I seemed to her. Yet she did not notice it, making me the mark for the shafts of her wit and fancy, and then repaying me by her con-

stant intimation that I was the chief cause of her rescue, and the one to whom her debt was greatest.

She could not understand our caution when we refused to build a fire at night. She said she wanted to see the light of the flames shining through the great forest, and hear the crackle of the wood as the blaze ate into its fibre. It would have been a most cheerful sight, as she said, but neither Osseo nor I would have dreamed of such an act; and even Winchester, with his limited experience of the wilderness, merely shook his head now and smiled when she spoke of it. But we made excuses, saying the first thing that came into our minds, and thus we went on, the great forest dropping behind us, mile on mile.

It is an old story that the taste of forbidden fruit is pleasant, and after many years of loss the society of a woman, one's equal, who can talk of the things one values most, has an intoxicating effect. Despite Osseo's warning, I lingered near her, and surely as leader of our little party I had good excuse. I did not know until then how I longed to hear over and over of that old life of mine and those who had been a part of it, and she, though all unaware, was the link between. Once, I think it was about the third day of our flight, she said:

"Ours is a strange country. Truly, extremes meet in it. What a contrast between these great and silent woods and a town like Philadelphia, crowded with human beings!"

"You speak truly," I said. "'Tis in reality a great town back there. I wish that I could see it now."

"Then you have seen it before?" she exclaimed, "and you are not the mere hunter that you pretend to be. I knew it—I knew it from the first."

And unless I was much mistaken I saw an eager light in her eyes, a wish that I should confirm what she said. I was confused for a moment, but then I recovered my poise and shook my head. "It is as I told you before," I

replied. "I know naught of the great towns. These woods are my home."

She laughed and looked at me with a provoking smile.

"Then yours must be a most peculiar mind," she said, "since you cultivate a speech and accent that men acquire only on paved streets. I predict that you shall soon be again in New York or Philadelphia, and that you will not find the ways of either strange."

Her smile became most winning. I knew that the Mother Eve in her was finding delight as thus she touched upon what she thought a mystery, and I fell into her humour.

"Your prediction can not come true," I said. "Do you know, Miss Carew, that all the prophets have been men?"

"Why?" she asked.

"Because the Superior Wisdom knows whom to trust."

"Now, I am sure that you have not lived all your life in the woods," she cried, "or you could not talk that way."

I did not answer her, contenting myself with silence, and she did not return to the subject. She perceived now that I would avoid it, and it was not in her nature to hurt or embarrass any one through mere idle talk. There was a fine delicacy in all her words, whether she chose to banter us or to pretend that she, too, was of the woods. She drew easily from Winchester his secret of the girl in England, and showed an interest not by any means assumed, that won his heart completely, and established a frank friendship between them. But it was not such a friendship of which any lover of hers back in Kentucky could be jealous. A third and invisible person, a blonde girl five thousand miles away, was the tie between them.

"Lee," he said to me one night, "she could be dangerous if she wished."

"But a good woman never wishes," I replied.

He looked at me critically, and then smiled.

"I do not know much about women, but I know better than that," he said.

The glory of the lingering autumn grew as we advanced. The wilderness seemed to have acquired a strange new splendour. Always that fine haze softening and deepening every colour hung like a misty veil in the air. The trees were brilliant masses of red and yellow and brown foliage, and when the leaves, shaken by the wind, fell to the ground, they fell softly and without complaint.

The game was plentiful and wondrous tame. Troops of deer were grazing in the glades, and scarce raised their heads unless we passed too near. The fish leaped up in the brooks and the silver bubbles marked where they sank again. Thus the peace of the wilderness infolded us, and each night the red sun sank in a blaze behind the black forest, to come up again in the same splendour the next morning, with the bars of red and gold piling above each other like terraces in the sky.

When a few days had passed, Miss Carew would fall into brief periods of depression, as if she were troubled by her thoughts or memories, but she would soon cast them off and become cheerful again. I wondered that they did not last longer, not understanding how she was able to bear herself so bravely, but I said nothing, knowing that she would not wish to hear such words.

She spoke sometimes of St. Clair's great defeat, and of all that it would cost us, but said that another American army would be sent against the tribes, and sooner or later we should surely win.

At last I told her that in a few days we should be at Fort Jefferson. She was silent, and a minute later I saw her turn white. I threw my arm around her and

held her just in time. She had fainted. Osseo stopped and turned. Nothing—not even a long-drawn breath—seemed to escape his notice.

"There is a brook near, I hear its trickle," he said. "Take her there. The water will bring her back to the earth."

I lifted her in my arms. How slender and weak she felt! I wondered again how the women who helped us to conquer our Western world could ever be paid back for their sufferings. In very truth, they were forced to tread the wilderness road. Osseo led us to the brook, a silver thread winding through green moss under the shade of mighty beech trees. The cool drops on her face revived her, and for a moment she did not recall where she was. When memory came back she was ashamed, the pink flushing into her cheeks while her tone became appealing.

"I promise, Mr. Lee, that I shall not faint again," she said. "It was weak and unworthy, but—but I could not help it."

I assured her that no woman in the world could have endured more or have been braver than she had been, and Osseo came to her relief handsomely. She was fully recovered in a few moments, and then we went on.

CHAPTER XVII

A HOUSE OF GLASS

My fool's paradise lasted long. We pressed on, finding the forest as peaceful and friendly as a gentleman's park in the Old World. Rabbits leaped up from their coverts, once or twice a deer ran across our path, but of human beings there was no sign save ourselves, and we rejoiced because in the wilderness one expects enemies—he merely hopes for friends.

The joy of escape was still upon Miss Carew, her passing weakness swiftly ceasing. Lightness of heart now remained with her; she was going back to civilization, and the dangers of the forest would no longer be hers.

I suppose that all of us have our moments of supreme weakness. I was a hardened man near to thirty; in my youth, in the gay days, when I was twenty, I had known beautiful women, and—well, I was near to loving more than one of them; but now, with such a past as mine, I should have known better. But she led me on, not that she meant to do it or knew that it was so, but it was the revulsion in her mind, the lightness of heart coming after escape from so many and such great dangers, because as we two walked together in the forest, Osseo and Winchester coming on behind, she talked of many things, and I heard her low laugh more than once; she told me again of her life in Philadelphia, where she called the names of men and women whom I too had known in those thoughtless days of my youth. Thus

did I find a link between us, though saying nothing of it to her. She knew well that old life of civilization, that larger world than this of the wilderness; and a hope to see it and taste it again, a longing which I had persuaded myself was dead, thrilled me. And with it came the old bitterness, stronger than ever because she was by my side. Were it not for that ancient stain I could walk with her, so I thought, as her equal, and measure myself in this gentler competition against any man who chose to enter, and I doubted not that they would be many.

I paid little heed to the forest then. My eyes were upon the rosy face beside me, noting the delicate curve of her chin and the wonderful deep blue of her eyes. Her hair was in two long braids, after the Indian fashion, and they hung far down her back, two tawny cables that glinted in the sun, pure gold, slightly tinted with a faint reddish gleam. This may seem a strange time to speak of or even note such matters, but mine was a peculiar situation, and this girl who walked beside me, trusting herself to me with such faith, stood not for herself alone, which would have been sufficient, but also for that old dead past which now in a foolish moment I almost persuaded myself might live again.

We walked as fast as we thought we ought to tax her strength in view of the journey that yet lay before us. The days were beautiful, more like late Indian summer than early winter, and the air was crisp and fresh. The wilderness was in a frolicsome mood, and presented a smiling face. Rose Carew had forgotten its treachery.

"How long will it take us to reach Fort Jefferson?" she asked.

"We should arrive there in two days."

"And then?"

"And then?" I repeated, not knowing her meaning.

"And then," she said, "what is to be done?"

"You," I replied, "will go back to your relatives in Kentucky. I shall return to the wilderness with Osseo."

"I think it likely," she said, "that I shall go at once from Kentucky to Philadelphia; after such an experience as this my father would consider me safer there. And why not come to Philadelphia too? You say that you know only the wilderness; then it is time that you knew the cities also. It is worth the visit."

"Do you ask me to come?" I said.

"Yes," she replied, looking straight into my eyes. "I wish to see you there."

The tempter spoke loudly to me then. I knew that I loved this girl, and I was sure that she did not hate me. Perhaps I might rebuild my ruined fortunes, and my soul was full of longing.

"It may be that I shall come," I said.

She did not reply, but for a moment there was a deeper colour in her face, and a sudden thought made me tremble with happiness. I have said that she did not hate me; that I knew, and I began to believe that, disgraced man as I was, I might hope for more.

We stopped one day by the side of a brook, and saw only peace around us. The forest was still friendly and protecting. But a little anxiety began to creep into my mind. Miss Carew noticed the cloud on my face, and quickly asked me its cause; I sought to dismiss it as nothing.

"You will come to Philadelphia; remember that you have promised," she said, misinterpreting the subject that I had upon my mind.

We resumed our flight as soon as we had taken a little rest, travelling nearly all of a beautiful starlit night, no enemy disturbing us, and nothing occurring to indicate that a hostile hand was near. When it was within an hour or two of daylight we told Miss Carew to rest. Osseo spread his blanket upon the ground for her, and Winchester had another with which he proposed to cover her while she slept. But she would not accept our suggestion. "No," she said, "I can go on,

and I will not have you risk yourselves further by delaying here on my account."

But I knew that she should stop, and I told her to do as we said. Her lip quivered a little, and she looked at me reproachfully, but she yielded with surprising meekness. Exhaustion has a way of playing us queer tricks, and five minutes after the blanket was spread over her she was asleep, only a pale wisp of her face showing above the covering.

Osseo left us for awhile, and presently returned with fruit of the wild paw-paw; but as Miss Carew was still sleeping, and we did not wish to wake her, we waited. All of us needed rest, and while the girl slept the men reclined against tree trunks, gathering fresh strength and watching the forest. None of us spoke, because of the sleeper.

We were so much nearer safety, and by as much did my spirits fall. I was no longer alone with her; I was not bewitched by the sound of her voice, and my fool's dream was over. I was what I was before I met her—John Lee, the condemned traitor—and while I might dream such a fool's dream once, it could not be done twice. It would be as well for her to be tied to a stone and dropped in a river as tied to me—the difference would not be great. And I was a fool, too, for thinking that she could ever consent to such an alliance when she learned what I was, as she speedily would do.

She woke with a pretty start of surprise to see the sun so high in the sky, and began to make excuses, pleasant for us to hear, but most unnecessary.

"Miss Carew," said Winchester, with a smile, "you sleep well for one who does not want to sleep at all."

She retorted in like fashion, and while Osseo produced his paw-paws and some dried venison from his pouch she shot the shafts of her wit and fancy at both Winchester and me. Her gay spirits evidently were on the increase, and she rallied me on my glum face.

"What has occurred since I slept that you have grown so sombre, Mr. Lee?" she asked. "One would think that you are about to become a missionary among the Indians instead of a scout and hunter who fights them. But, in truth, has anything wrong happened to you?"

She looked at me with such clear eyes of sympathy that my spirits fell to greater depths than ever, but I responded that my countenance was a deception, a law unto itself, and that often I was most joyous when it seemed most gloomy.

After our brief breakfast we resumed the flight toward Fort Jefferson, which we reached on the following day without interruption, and behind the walls of which we at last placed Miss Carew in safety.

We found the fort filled with soldiers, other troops having come and officers of high rank present, among the latter Captain Hardy, who had shown me sympathy before St. Clair's defeat. Nor was he less friendly now.

"'Tis a great deed that you have done, Mr. Lee," he said, "this saving of Miss Carew."

"Others have done as much as I," I replied. "Besides Osseo there were Winchester, the Englishman, and a wild Frenchman named De Chamillard, whose fate I do not know."

"You were the leader," he said, "and by this deed you have made new and powerful friends."

"It may be so," I replied, "but I shall not use them. I return to the forest when this task is concluded."

He put his hand upon my shoulder and his manner was most friendly. It was like the touch of a brother.

"I think that you do wrong, Lee," he said. "Finish this campaign with us and go back to the East. There are few things so bad that they can not be cured. No one can overlook your work here on the border; friends may do much; you may return to your original position, and you may marry."

I saw plainly by his eyes what he meant, but I shook my head.

"Do not tempt me, Hardy," I said. "I have already been tempted enough, God knows!"

And then in a weak and unmanly moment I put my face in my hands and groaned. He said no more, but he sounded my praises in the fort, as many things proved to me, among them the deference shown me by the soldiers and young lieutenants as I passed.

About midnight after our arrival the sentinels were aroused by a strange, clear note from the forest. I too heard it, and I went to the palisades, where I found that Osseo had preceded me. Captain Hardy was on watch, and turning to me he asked:

"What is that odd sound, Mr. Lee?"

It rose upon the still air, clear and melodious, and I knew it at once.

"What is it?" repeated Captain Hardy.

"That," I replied, "is the mad Frenchman of whom I told you. Won't you kindly warn your sentinels not to shoot at him?"

"He is not so mad as he seems," replied the captain, "since he is wise enough to play his flute when he approaches the fort at night and save himself from a bullet."

I made no mistake when I said it was De Chamillard, as he emerged presently from the woods, playing another flute, and approached the palisade. When Captain Hardy admitted him he saw me, and cried out with joy.

"*Ma foi*, but you are a welcome vision, Mr. Lee!" he said. "Did you bring the beautiful lady with you?"

I replied in the affirmative.

"Thanks to your help, M. De Chamillard," I said. "You have risked your life nobly in her service."

"'Tis a small matter to risk one's life for such a lady," he said. "The debt is mine."

Then he informed me that the Indians found him bound in my place a few hours after my flight. There was a great uproar, but no one thought of blaming the man who was in Manito's special keeping. He was released, and again he wandered as he chose, and his choice took him in a few days to Fort Jefferson, his desire to know of us urging him on. He was truly rejoiced over our escape, the sincerity of his manner permitting no doubt of it, and avowed his intent to pay his humble respects to the beautiful lady, as he insisted upon calling her, at the first opportunity, a purpose which I could not criticise.

I was near the palisade early the next morning, and Rose Carew came to me there. I saw at once by her face that she knew. Some one—and there are always such—had taken the trouble already to tell her. Here, in her presence, stubbornness and that sense of defiance came to my aid, as they had come when I faced others.

"They have told you of me; you know now what I am," I said.

"I did not hear until a few minutes ago the charge against you," she replied.

I looked at her, and I saw in her eyes the glow of confidence in me. I knew then that I was to her the man who had rescued her from the savages and who had guided her safely through the woods. To a pure mind like hers it did not seem possible that such a man could have done a great wrong. My heart sank, but it was no time for evasion or subterfuge.

"You have heard of the charge soon enough," I said. "But I do not believe it."

She was refreshed by her sleep, and the colour had come back to her cheeks. Her clothing, torn by the bushes and briers, had been repaired by the loans of other women in the fort.

I met her questioning look with firmness, but I knew that I cared greatly for this girl's opinion.

"I am waiting for you to deny this odious charge, Mr. Lee," she said.

"I have not said that I was innocent."

The old warlike passion rose stronger than ever in me—not against her, but against the situation in which I found myself. Let her believe it if she wished to do so! Strengthened by this feeling, I beheld without flinching the incredulous look in her eyes change to surprise, then to brief aversion, then to momentary bewilderment, and back to disbelief—all these variations as swift as the shifting colours of water under sunlight. 'Tis pleasant to feel that you have one's faith, but 'tis bitter to shock that faith. So I said, with some hesitation:

"Miss Carew, I was tried and convicted of the crime with which you have heard me charged."

"Then you were guilty?"

I was silent, and the momentary look of aversion returned to her face.

"Why don't you deny it?" she cried. "I would not have believed it had everybody in the world save yourself told me that it was true—and after all that you have done! And throughout our flight you had the look and manner of a true man! And you were concealing the truth even then! Why did you bear yourself so? Why did you seem to be the most honest and unselfish of men? Was it merely a part that you played to deceive others?"

I had offered myself a sacrifice in her place, and for the moment, under the influence of other emotions, she seemed to forget it. But she was white; she could not have the simple creed of that gentleman in red, Osseo, who took me for what I was, not for what I may have been years before. After all, might not there be something in his contention that his was the superior race, simpler perhaps, but also more majestic? So I met her eyes again—so firmly that hers, not mine, fell. Then

she suddenly extended to me her hand, which I did not take, because I felt anger in my soul.

"Mr. Lee," she said, "will you not take my hand?"

"Why?"

"Because I wish to beg your pardon. What right have I to inquire into your past? I can not believe you guilty. I do not think that the man who risked his life again and again to save a stranger could have committed so base a crime."

"And if I had committed it you would despise me. You would let the past outweigh the present. You have just credited me with a good deed: then a bad one done long ago is to have more effect after so many years than a good one done now?"

"I am not different from other people," she said, half in bewilderment, half in appeal.

I had Osseo in mind, and I did not answer her.

"Mr. Lee," she said, "let us be friends. If you did this I know that you have since undone it a hundredfold. I spoke foolishly just now, but it was under impulse. It is not for me to be the judge of any man, and I can only say in apology that I cared for your honour. I did not wish to hear any one speak against you. 'Tis but human, I think, to wish well to those who have done us a great service."

I took her hand then, but I saw that her manner was not quite the same. She was now making an effort to like me. Yet I was re-enforced by pride, which can bear great burdens.

She went away without saying more, but presently she came back to me, and her manner was winning. "Your breakfast is ready, Mr. Lee," she said.

A bright spot of colour appeared in either cheek, and then faded. Her manner was embarrassed, and I surveyed her for a moment trying to discern her meaning. She flushed again, but, as before, the colour was fleeting.

"I know it is waiting," I said, "and a place is left for me over there."

I pointed to a group of scouts and hunters who were enjoying the morning venison and coffee.

"I have prepared your breakfast myself, Mr. Lee," she said, "and I hope that you will not refuse it. I wanted to give you something better than the common camp fire."

So I went with her and found that she had made ready with her own hands the best food that could be obtained, and, moreover, she insisted upon serving it herself. I was grateful, but there yet seemed to be something lacking in her manner. She was singularly silent as she attended to the duties of this office, and suddenly it occurred to me that she was doing penance. She did not like me now; she could not forget what she had heard, but she was seeking to show the gratitude that she believed she ought to feel. So a resolution was formed in my mind—that is, it formed itself; I always felt that my will had but little to do with it. It was, I suppose, another ebullition of warlike temper.

I began to find fault with the breakfast; I remarked that the venison was not well cooked, at least not so in the opinion of a hunter of experience; the coffee had a suspicious muddiness and weakness; in fact, I was so captious and fault-finding that perhaps I should now be ashamed of myself. She flushed and pouted after her quick fashion at my first complaints, and then flaming red spots remained in either cheek. But she endured it awhile in silence.

Then I shifted my comments to the hollowness of human protestations. I asked if one really had friends; was there ever a time when they did not cast one away at the slightest excuse? She said nothing, and I returned to my criticisms upon her breakfast, although it was really of the best.

"Mr. Lee," she said at last, "I told you in the forest

that you could not have always been a hunter and wanderer through this Western wilderness, as you seemed to have in your speech and manner a reminder of the cultivated East."

"Well?"

"I am convinced now that I was mistaken."

"But you have just been told that I was a Revolutionary soldier."

"It was some other Lee."

She would say nothing more after this, but I did not change my manner, still feeling belligerent, and resolved not to wish sympathy and friendship unless they were spontaneous. Her own attitude became somewhat hostile, but she forced herself to finish what she had undertaken.

"Miss Carew," I said carelessly, when the breakfast was over, "I thank you, and I tell you now that in a day or two we start south. I shall not leave you until I give you back to your parents."

But she did not show aversion to me again. She seemed rather now to seek my presence, and I did not avoid it. Whether it was the feeling of penance that still urged her I did not know, and I began to feel ease while with her.

De Chamillard heard of my conviction, but, like Winchester, he scorned it.

"If I do not know whether a friend of mine is innocent or guilty," he said, "it is certainly my part to believe him innocent, or I am no friend. It is pleasanter to me, Monsieur Lee, to consider you innocent, and I swear I will not listen to anything else!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TERROR

It was my plan to return at once to the forest with Osseo, thinking my use past, but on second thought I lingered yet a few days at the fort. Such confusion and discord reigned in our councils, and there were so many rumours of an Indian advance in numbers far greater than at St. Clair's defeat, that deep alarm reigned. Officers and men began to fear for our safety even behind log walls; and although I knew that the army of the savages had scattered for the present, it was a vain effort to tell them so. I was not believed. Moreover, the remnants of our force were indulging in fierce recriminations; the militia called the regulars fools, the regulars called the militia cowards, and the hunters agreed that both were right. Not having fought well against the enemy, we now fought well among ourselves.

It was at this juncture that Captain Hardy delivered to me a message.

"The militia are going home," he said, "and they go whether General St. Clair wills it or not. They say that they have had enough, and I can not find it in my heart to blame them. All the women who survive will accompany them, including Miss Carew, and I ask you and your Indian comrades to go with them too. They need such men, for the danger from the savages will not be past until they cross the Ohio, and perhaps not then. Miss Carew wants you, as she has more confidence in

you than in anybody else, and I make it a personal matter also."

I could not refuse such a request. Moreover, having gone so far, I was not willing to leave Miss Carew while she was yet in danger. I had given my promise to bring her back safely to Kentucky, and the task was unfinished.

So we started the next day, our party consisting of the militia, the women, and some of the scouts and hunters, including old Joe Grimes and Winchester. Few affectionate regrets were exchanged by the regulars and militia as they parted. The hunters and scouts said little, but that little burned.

"I hate a fool more than a coward, and a coward more than a fool," said Joe Grimes to me. "These soldiers are mighty small potatoes, and mighty few in a hill. Look how they've been beat. I tell you a short horse is soon curried."

"But it was a surprise, Joe," I said. "Both regulars and militia did well under the circumstances. The blame was with the leaders. Think how Braddock's army was cut to pieces in the same way by the savages at Fort Duquesne! The Hessians scarce made any resistance when we dropped on them that cold morning at Princeton, and they are fine soldiers, too."

"What's the use of good fighting when your general leads you straight into a hornets' nest?" he repeated stubbornly. "The hornets sting you, but you can't catch 'em. Now, I never put my hand out farther than I can draw it back. To the Old Nick, I say, with all soldiers! They're sticks of wood with coloured clothes on. Kentucky had better cut loose and paddle her own canoe. If she don't, she'll sink where she stands. The Spaniard or the Frenchman would be a better friend than the Gov'ment back there in the East. You're barking up the wrong tree when you praise it to me."

Old Joe but spoke a feeling too prevalent in Ken-

tucky, based upon the impotence of the Federal Government to protect its people from the savages and its weak dealings with them, a belief that had come to an alarming pass a little before in the Spanish intrigue; but I refused to listen to him, though seeing well that the great rout of St. Clair would stir it anew. Again I thought of Mr. Carew. He was just the man to take advantage of such a moment and turn it somehow to his own profit. One great plan of his had failed. He would be ready with another.

We travelled fast; in truth, we fled to the southward through the wintry forest and across the frozen streams. It was a lone and desolate wilderness now, without sign of human being save ourselves. Nowhere did the scouts behold the Indian token, and I was sure that our path lay clear before us.

"The tribes rest," said Osseo. "Their hunger for scalps is great, but now their stomachs have been filled. We flee in peace."

But our troubles nevertheless were great. Winter came upon us in full swing. On the second day of the march the sky turned a dirty gray, and the clouds trooped by in unbroken battalions. The wind blew out of the northwest, raw and chill. Daring the risk of the savages, we built, lest we freeze to death, a great fire in the forest, throwing upon it heaps of the fallen timber with which the wilderness was littered until the blaze rose higher than our heads and the popping of the dry wood was like volleys of pistol shots. I have learned that nothing can confer gaiety like a red and blazing fire on a cold night, and despite the horrors of the past, we began to grow cheerful. The women spread their hands before the flames, and I watched Rose Carew as she stood there, luminous in the glow, the red coming back to her cheeks, and all the spring and elasticity of youth and strength returning to her figure. I had, after all, much to be grateful for. I had saved

her, and I was taking her back to her parents in Kentucky. Then I turned away with a sigh, not knowing why I was unhappy when I should be happy.

The clouds opened toward morning, and snow fell to the depth of several inches. When the women awoke and came from their blankets they saw a white wilderness. Earth and forest alike were covered, and the risen sun shining in all its glory was reflected back in rays of yellow and silver. The trees stood up, great cones of white, and the breaking of the branches under the weight of snow as we moved on through the wilderness made a steady crackle around us, like the fire of skirmishers. The skies were blue and clear once more, and the air was crisp and cold. It was a world in all its white beauty and splendour, and we pressed on with as much speed as Nature would allow, often in silence, save for the tread of our footsteps, the cracking of the branches, and the sighing fall of snow into snow. The brooks were frozen in their beds, and we passed them, scarce knowing they were there. By night our camp fire blazed through the forest, telling to all who would look where we lay, but no enemy came to our beacon light. The wilderness that curved around was yet lone and bare, and when we rested before the blazing logs we slept in peace, save those who watched.

The gaiety of our company increased, and the rebound of spirits was greatest in the women. I wish to give them full credit for all the courage that they had and showed. But there were some of us still gloomy. We were looking ahead, and saw the storm that would be let loose on the border by our great defeat. The savages would hang upon Kentucky like a cloud of hornets, and I beheld already the empty cabins and heard the mourning for the slaughtered. Moreover, I knew well what was passing in the mind of old Joe Grimes, and also in the minds of many other Kentuckians.

"What's the good of a gov'ment that can't protect you?" he said on the fifth day of our march. "All these men from the East are tarred with the same stick, and when it comes to helping the West they stand back like a bound boy at a husking."

"Give the Government another chance, Joe," I said.

"It's had too many already," he replied passionately, "an' you, John Lee, have the least cause of all men to defend it. When I've got a gun that's no good I throw it away an' get a better one; I don't stand blinking like a toad in a thunderstorm; an' that's what men ought to do with a gov'ment. I tell you we've brought our pigs to a poor market."

"But you don't believe in any sort of government, Joe."

"No, I don't," he replied with increasing stubbornness. "Abolish 'em all, I say, and let every fellow fend for himself. Then you won't waste your breath singing tunes that nobody will listen to."

In which opinion Joe Grimes was not alone among frontiersmen.

Winchester chanced to come near him at this moment, and old Joe turned upon him furiously.

"It's you English that's doin' it!" he cried. "You keep the Northwestern posts, breakin' the treaty, an' you arm the savages an' turn 'em loose upon us. You are as black as they are!"

"I don't know the full facts about this question," replied Winchester with dignity; and then, with a slight humorous smile, "the English Cabinet did not consult me about it, and so I decline to be responsible."

"You know, Joe," I said, "that Mr. Winchester is our friend, and there are some among us who owe him much."

"That's so," he said with a revulsion of feeling.—"Shake hands, Mr. Winchester; I eat my words if they don't strike you right."

But I saw him a little later in deep conversation with some of the Kentucky militiamen, and I judged by their actions that they would not care to have their talk overheard by those in whom they did not have the utmost confidence.

Some rumour of the discontent reached the ears of Rose Carew, because she came to me that evening as I sat by the camp fire and asked:

"Mr. Lee, what do you think will be said in Kentucky when the tale of this slaughter shall have spread throughout the settlements?"

"Many things that will not be pleasing in the ears of the President and his Cabinet."

"I do not doubt it, but they are making a great mistake."

She sat on a log near me, and remained silent for a long time. Many thoughts were in her mind, and I believed myself able to read them. Her face was luminous in the fire, and it expressed her emotions as they passed. Her heart wept over the scourged and scarred border, and she feared, too, the black brows of the men who marched with us.

"Don't blame them too much," I said. "They have suffered and expect to suffer more. It's a fit of passion that will not last."

She looked up in surprise.

"You have guessed what I was thinking," she said. "But I did not believe you would be so quick to say the feeling would pass. You have no cause to love this confederation."

"Is love always logical?" I asked.

She did not answer me just then, but leaned her face upon her hands, where it was full in the red glow, and presently I saw a fire in her eyes which was not that shining from the red coals.

"No, it is not logical," she said at length, "not even the love of country; but is it any the worse because of

that? I love my country with a love that I do not wish to measure, and for which I do not try to account. Sometimes I think that women are better patriots than men, because we do not seek to reason about it. The fact is enough. If I were a man nothing could shake this love in me; even if I had done my country a great wrong or had been falsely convicted of such wrong, I would turn a cold ear to the disappointment and discontent of my countrymen. If guilty myself once, I would prove that I could never be so again; or, if suffering from the greatest injustice, I would show that the fact could not incite me to wrong."

"Miss Carew," I said, "the advice that you give me is good, and is meant well, nor do I wish to be impolite, but I did not need it."

Her cheeks flamed into deeper red.

"I should ask your pardon, Mr. Lee," she said. "What right have I, for whom you have done so much and who has done so little for you, to offer you advice? Yet I will not ask it, because I think that my motive was right."

Then she rose and walked toward the women's quarters.

We were now approaching the Ohio, and all that we had foreseen came to pass. There was a thin fringe of settlements along the northern shore of the river, scattered cabins, lone families seeking a new home in the wilderness under the very edge of the scalping knife, as others had done a few years before in Kentucky. Full of hope, they had seen the army of St. Clair go northward, and they waited to hear that the Indian power was destroyed. Now they saw a wretched remnant of that army returning, and terror spread to the farthest cabin. There was no longer any protection for them. Women and children alike would be given to the tomahawk. On any night they might find the savages at the door, and that would be the end—and, in truth, their fears were

realized too often. Torch and the tomahawk soon raged along the border, and the smoke of the burning cabins told what St. Clair had cost us. The tale ran to the uttermost limit. There was naught that a man could rely on now save his own arm and eye. The Government could do nothing, or rather it made the bad worse; and now, after its great defeat, it was about to desert us. It was not a wonder that terror reigned; that the women in the lone cabins saw the edge of the tomahawk in every flash of sunlight, and heard the tread of the savage in every fall of snow from the overweighted bough.

Some of the families joined us as we marched southward, but most remained ready with a silent stubbornness to face whatever fate might come. It was the character of our borderers. When the wave of people had once rolled forward it never rolled back. The tomahawk, the scalping knife, the burning cabins, and the torture were alike unheeded. Now they had come to hold the land, and here they would stay.

"Why don't they flee, Mr. Lee? Why don't they cross the Ohio into Kentucky, where the white power grows strong?" asked Miss Carew of me as we passed a cabin whose inmates, though knowing the danger and appreciating our warning, refused to go.

"For the same reason that those who came to Kentucky would not turn back," I answered, "and what that is I know not. Perhaps it is the love of a new land that grips our race so and makes it scorn death and torture. Look at Kentucky! It is watered with the blood of the white man, but a new commonwealth is rising there as surely as we live, and it was won in the way that these people will win the Northwest."

I have heard that it takes an old country with many historic associations to inspire the love of its people, but the saying, I know, is not true. Already the men in Kentucky, not one of whom was born upon its soil, loved

it with a passion not surpassed by the devotion of any Frenchman or Englishman to his native land.

As we advanced the terror grew. We found in many cases that the tale of the slaughter had preceded us, and it did not suffer in quantity or quality as it passed from cabin to cabin in the great woods. The fugitives, though still the exception, gradually gathered in our train, and they were a pitiful sight to see, mostly women and little children fleeing from the mercy of the red man, which in all but rare instances is no mercy at all.

It was now that I saw Rose Carew in her noblest character. She had passed through enough to break the spirit of most women, but in the presence of those poor fugitives she was all strength and elasticity. She tended them and she encouraged them. She said that another army would come and better generals would lead it; the savages would be crushed and the border made safe; the President himself would see to it, and there was no occasion for despair. She would not listen to any of the talk against the President and the Government; and once, when she heard old Joe Grimes upon his favourite topic, she denounced him so fiercely that he shrank back in affright, and then with a true backwoodsman's gallantry would not say a word to her in his own defence.

Her bearing toward me changed. She treated me now as a comrade—as one with whom she had shared dangers and with whom she had triumphed over them, but to my great relief she said nothing of gratitude. She seemed to know that I did not wish it, but often she would call upon me to help her in her errands about the camp as if we were brothers in arms, and I acquired an ease in her presence which I had not known before.

Thus our march continued in the white world of winter, through snow-covered forests, over frozen streams, and across little prairies, until we reached the Ohio, which was running deep in its wide channel, and covered with floating ice, a formidable barrier to all

but the most skilful. But the scouts brought a half-dozen canoes from coverts in the brush and rushes, and after many trips the last of us were taken over in safety. Osseo stopped here to await my return from the homes of the white men.

Now we entered Kentucky, and the terror spread there too. The savages would come again, and all the old tale of atrocity and suffering lasting so many years would be repeated. There was hardly a home in this new land which had not lost some member under the tomahawk, and they expected to see its flash again. The cry of alarm was heard in every home, and mingled with it was another and angrier cry—a cry of rage against the Government beyond the mountains because it had allowed such a scourge to be let loose upon them. It swelled into thunder, but I listened little to it then, hastening on with Miss Carew to Danville, where I expected to find her parents. I heard that Mr. Carew had organized an expedition of his own to secure her rescue, but I surmised that he was now on his way back to Danville, or was there, having heard of her safety. And I was sure, too, that his crafty ally, Knowlton, would be with him.

CHAPTER XIX

A WHISPER OF INTRIGUE

WINCHESTER left us to go to Lexington, where one of his agents lived, and a day later we were in Danville. I was among friends again. They inquired little in Kentucky about a man's past. All were too new themselves for that, and the force of circumstances had made the best fighter the best citizen. I was valued, and once again I saw that I was among friends who thought of to-day and not yesterday.

We found that Mr. Carew had gone to meet us, but following another road by mistake, had passed us by. The mother, that invalid with the noble and gentle face, took Miss Carew in her arms, and I turned away from a scene which affected me powerfully. There was no reward now for which I would have traded the memory of the sacrifice in the wilderness, and of all the words that Mrs. Carew said to me, those that pleased me most were these: "I knew that you would bring her back to me, Mr. Lee; when you gave your promise I never doubted."

Mr. Carew came on the afternoon of the same day, full of gratitude, pouring out his thanks to me, calling me his daughter's saviour, and a hero of whom the West should be proud. It seemed to me that on the whole he was effusive, and by the rush of quantity wished to end the supply as soon as possible. I was aware that he must know now who I was, and wishing to relieve him, I withdrew into the free air. He urged me with but faint heart to stay and share the hospitality of his home, but his daughter said nothing.

While the atmosphere into which I stepped when I left the house of Mr. Carew was free, it was also surcharged, and I was soon to discover it. Kentucky had received already the permisison of the Union to become a State, and its political capital was this town of Danville, a sprightly village with some fine houses built of bricks brought in wagons across the Alleghanies, and inhabitants who had received the best culture that the East could afford side by side with the wilderness rovers. It was a strange mingling, and yet the diverse elements were fusing already.

The surcharging of the atmosphere was of the same tone and texture that I had noticed in crossing the Ohio, but there was a great increase here. They were not mutterings, they were open and violent curses that I heard: "Have we been deserted by the Union?" "Does the Government merely send us imbeciles to lead us to slaughter?"

Now I saw the beginnings of the Kentucky character as it is developing to-day, that openness and frankness of dealing, the tendency to give all or nothing, those fiery bursts of passion when enraged—the whole making a nature generous but uncalculating. I am of the opinion that this character was formed by the long years of Indian fighting on the soil of Kentucky, which certainly merited its name of the Dark and Bloody Ground.

Much to my surprise, I saw in Danville old Joe Grimes, an inveterate woodsman, a man who was seldom willing to come where the smoke of a half-dozen chimneys troubled his view.

"Why, Joe," I exclaimed, "what do you in a town?"

"May I not come here if I want to, as well as you?" he replied defiantly.

"I know it," I said, "but I tell you, Joe Grimes, that you did not come without a good reason."

He looked at me suddenly, and I saw that it was not now his intent to evade my question any longer.

"I'm troubled, John," he said. "I think there's too much gov'ment in this country. I thought maybe I might help cure it. I want to go the whole hog or none. I'm going to make a spoon or spoil a horn, and I think, too, that you might help us, John Lee, considerin' that you haven't much to be thankful to the Gov'ment for."

"Joe Grimes," I said, giving him back his steady look, "I think it is impossible for you to be a villain, but I am not sure that you can't be a fool."

His face was tanned to the colour of leather. Nevertheless the red came flushing through.

"I won't quarrel with you, John Lee," he said, "because I've fought beside you too often."

"I know it, and for that reason I dare to speak to you as I have done."

"You can't fight battles with popguns, and you can't win wars with armies that don't know how to fight. Besides, I don't believe in gov'ment nohow," he repeated, as he left me and entered the little inn which received visitors in Danville—not an inn really, but a private house, whose owner consented to take travellers for money. It was one of the few places in Kentucky where a man paid for his food and lodging.

It was a varied company gathered there, and it surprised me by its size. The cause must be powerful, I thought, that drew so many into so small a place. There were hunters in buckskin hunting shirts and leggings and coonskin caps; two or three lawyers in black garb, among them the thin-faced Knowlton; and two men in fine small-clothes and powdered wigs. One of the latter was the heavy man Curry, his face now sullen and resolute.

A great fire was burning in the fireplace, which extended almost across the end of the room, and the apartment looked most cheerful, for it was bitter cold outside, and those who entered came with red ears and noses.

Joe Grimes sat in the chimney-seat calmly smoking a pipe. Occasionally he tapped with a meditative forefinger the pods of red pepper that hung beside him.

Knowlton had been talking, but he ceased when I entered.

"Speak on, Master Knowlton," said Grimes. "It's John Lee; I guess you know him; a true man, if there's one in the West; a man who has less cause even than we have to love the Gov'ment."

The lawyer gave me a knowing leer—I hated him for it—and resumed the thread of his discourse. I took my seat without comment.

"The weakness of the Government has been exposed," said Knowlton, his sharp eyes watching every one of his auditors, "and with the greatest force by this horrible defeat of St. Clair. Would any Kentuckian, would any man of sense, have led an army into such a snare? Didn't the Kentuckians say that St. Clair was an imbecile, and doesn't all the world know now that they were right?"

He paused for his words to sink deep, and all gave approving signs, none with more emphasis than Curry and his companion, who was a younger man and weak of brow and chin.

"What can the Government do for us?" resumed Knowlton. "Nothing. What have we to do with the East anyway? We are cut off from it by great mountains. Our outlet is down the current of the Mississippi, and there the French and Spanish lie. It is with them that our great dealings in the future must be."

"Do you mean to say that we should cut the tie connecting us with the East, and treat with the Frenchman and the Spaniard? That was tried a year or two ago, and the people would not have it," said the young man with the weak face.

"Softly, softly, Master Harvey," replied Knowlton in gentle tones. "Don't put in my mouth words that

have not come from it. I have not advised, I have not even suggested, that we treat with the Spaniards and the French. I but stated the facts in regard to the weakness of the Government and its small value to us. Perhaps if those who were concerned in the Spanish intrigue had waited until the present they would find the times riper."

"That is not a surmise; it is the truth," said Curry, with an emphatic snap of his strong jaws.

"Undoubtedly, Master Curry," said Knowlton in his smooth tones, and then putting his pipe in his mouth he began to smoke. I saw well that his words went far, and I knew to what end they tended. I judged that Curry was his strongest ally, and I still deemed it fit to keep silence. I saw through the open window the expanse of hill and meadow, beautiful even in its winter garb, and I thought it too fine a land and won too hardly to be lost. And I thought, too, as I looked at Knowlton and Curry, that when I sat in the lodge of Little Turtle, deadly foe to us though he was, I was in the presence of a nobler man than they.

Knowlton renewed the conversation presently, and kept it upon the same note. By artful device and insinuation, he dwelt upon the sufferings of Kentucky, her great services in winning the Northwest from the British, and the small reward that she had received; her desertion by the Government, he called it. Should this new State beyond the mountains tie herself to a lifeless Union, which would hang but a dead weight upon her?

This was plain talk, although no purpose was mentioned, but it was a land where a man might say what he chose, being held to account for his deeds, not his words, and I yet kept my peace, being willing to listen since they were willing for me to hear. The door opened presently, and a new figure entered.

It was Mr. Carew who joined the group around the

fire, and the familiar manner in which they received him persuaded me that he was not a stranger to such conversation as had been going on. It was most disagreeable news to me, though not wholly a surprise, that such projects, vague though they might be, should flit through the head of Rose Carew's father. Yet I had read his character in his face, ambitious and of the world, to the last degree.

A seat of honour near the fire was given to him and a glass of one of those noble mixed brews, for which this State is achieving fame, was brought. When he drank he looked inquiringly at me, but I said nothing and gave him back no answering glance. Nevertheless, he seemed satisfied.

"What news do you discuss, Master Knowlton?" he asked.

"There is but one topic now present in every man's mind," returned Knowlton, in the rhetorical strain that he had adopted; "it is the future of this fair land which we have so recently won with our blood"—I was willing to wager that no drop of his had ever been shed for such a purpose—"and we dread what the future will bring."

"We have good cause for such dread," rejoined Mr. Carew.

Here Curry broke in with abrupt utterances. He was a downright fellow given to impulsive speech, as any one could see, and he said that the men who had treated with Spain were not far wrong. Kentucky, in truth, had nothing to gain from the confederation of States; there she would be a subordinate member, serving merely as a bulwark against the Western tribes, giving all and receiving nothing; her place was in a Western empire, of which she should be the head and her first citizens the leaders.

The others were silent, willing that this headstrong man should do all such direct talking, but I saw the eyes of Knowlton and Mr. Carew light up, and I knew that

both were dreaming of a great place in this Western empire. Old Joe Grimes was uneasy. Speech so plain had an unpleasant sound in his ears. It was the precious and inalienable privilege of our borderers to speak bitterly of our Government and our people, but they liked it little when the same words were used by others. Now I understood the feelings of Joe Grimes much better than he did himself: slow anger against Knowlton was rising in his mind.

I left the room presently, Mr. Carew following me. When we were outside he approached me in most friendly fashion, and hooked his arm in mine. Despite the fact that he was Rose Carew's father I felt aversion, but I did not withdraw my arm.

"You heard what that hot-head Curry was saying, did you not, Mr. Lee?" he asked.

"Ay, I heard it," I replied, "and I paid heed to it."

"It was rash talk; and yet, when one considers, it might seem much less foolish to think such a thing than to say it."

"It would be treason," I said.

"I do not know," he continued; "Kentucky has done much for the Union, but the Union has done nothing for her. I should think, Mr. Lee, that Curry's idea would appeal especially to you. A great wrong has been inflicted on you by our Government."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

"It must be so," he replied after some hesitation. "And it would be a fine opportunity for you too. You are loved on the border for the deeds that you have done. Your words are of weight and influence with the people. In this new land, if it were cut off from the old, you could rise to high position should you wish it."

"I do not wish it," I said.

"That's strange," he replied. "Most young men have ambition, and few would refuse a prize that is ready to be placed in their hands."

"It is treason."

"Treason is a harsh word, but it is sometimes used carelessly. If a portion of a country is abandoned by the remainder, it is scarce treason in that portion to take care of itself as best it can."

"I will not share any plan to sever Kentucky from the Union or to plot with the French or Spanish," I said, resolved that such talk had gone far enough.

He dropped my arm and faced me with a look of amazement. Then he laughed lightly. I discovered now that he was an adept at intrigue.

"My dear Lee," he cried, "I think he is a bold man who should propose such a plan, and yet one likes to speculate now and then concerning the notions of others. Even now I am seeking to put myself in the place of that hot-head Curry, and imagine the feelings prompting him to such foolish talk."

"Yet one may have too strong an imagination, or he may let it go too far," I said.

"Quite true," he rejoined, "and I advise you, Mr. Lee, not to let yours trifle with you."

Then, as if to apologize for the sharpness of his remark, he began quickly to talk of my services to his daughter, and again was so profuse in his thanks that I would have escaped from him had he not held me by the arm. I much preferred Miss Carew's own manner of scarce alluding to her rescue, but I listened perforce to her father's. I did not believe him to be wholly bad; merely somewhat blinded to other things when his own interests were concerned.

We passed a man, a stranger to me—it was but my second visit to Danville—a tall, thin man with a pale face and the look of a student, to whom Mr. Carew gave a contemptuous nod. As the stranger glanced twice at us, I was moved to ask Mr. Carew who he was.

"It's only Underwood," he replied.

"Only Underwood? Why do you say 'only'?"

"Well, Underwood hasn't a very good name in one respect. You know that personal bravery is a quality greatly needed in this region, and, to put it mildly, Underwood is possessed of a somewhat excessive caution. He is a sort of school-teacher and law student. I believe that he hopes to be a great lawyer."

I looked back at the retreating form of Underwood, and I felt first aversion and then pity. The border despises a coward most of all men, but I had been through the Revolutionary War, and I knew that one might be a coward because of Nature's decree.

"Perhaps it is not his fault," I said. "It may be that he is so because God made him so."

"True," replied Mr. Carew, "but men do not have time to make such inquiries. They take people as they are."

He left me presently, and I found in talk with others that the complaints against the Government were increasing. Many men had come to Danville, and discontent was the note of all, a note aggravated by reports of atrocities now coming from the border. The red terror was spreading, despite midwinter. Daring bands of savages had crossed the Ohio, and the tomahawk was busy.

Although it had been my intent not to linger, and Osseo was waiting for me, I concluded, in view of what I had heard, to stay yet a little longer in Danville.

CHAPTER XX

A MAN OF FEAR

On the morning of my third day in Danville I met Jasper Lee, smart and dapper, and clad once more in American costume. I did not seek to conceal my surprise at his appearance, but he was complete master of himself, greeting me with an appearance of great warmth—it was in the presence of others—and hastening to explain how he had come back to his own race. I was fain to confess to myself that his statements were ingenious and plausible, because he told half the truth, and thus had a solid basis upon which to proceed with his lies.

"You know, cousin," he said, "that I was forced to adopt the costume of those hideous red wretches, and pretend that I had become one of them. But only a day or two after your own escape I managed to slip from their village, and after countless hardships reached the Ohio. Ah, it is like a terrible dream, those days in the Indian village!"

Jasper could have made his fortune as a play actor, and there was none present, save myself, who doubted the sincerity of his words. Perhaps many in like circumstances would have done the same, and how could one situated as I prove that his motives had been bad?

And I was in doubt whether I should speak, even were my words to carry conviction. So I kept silence, not seeking to restrain Jasper from pluming and disporting himself as he would. Nor was he at all neg-

lectful in this particular, making himself with his fine tale much of a hero in Danville, and soon establishing a more intimate friendship than ever with Mr. Carew. He was restored too into a sort of place with Rose Carew, persuading her that he had been an injured man—in fact, somewhat of a martyr. I saw readily the drift of his design, which, in truth, was not new, and I was bound to own that all the chances were in his favour. Even one less worthy than Mr. Carew might well favour Jasper's suit for the hand of his daughter.

Three days after Jasper arrived Captain Hardy came, and his mission was to call for volunteers to serve in the regular army on the border. His appearance was at a most inopportune moment, the passions of the Kentuckians being inflamed and the mind of every man full of anger against the generals who had led the army into such a snare. He asked for those who would serve to meet him on an appointed day in the public square; but instead there came a mob which began first to jeer and then pelt him with snow-balls, although I noticed the "coward" Underwood seeking to restrain them. Poor Captain Hardy knew not what to do. He put his hand upon the hilt of his sword, and evidently his first thought was to draw it and lay about him with the flat of the blade; but he saw that such an act would not serve. These were people who would retort blows with death.

The jeers increased in number, and a lump of snow hardened in water knocked the captain's cocked hat from his head. It was then that a woman interfered, and it was fortunate that it was so, as I know not whether a man could have commanded like respect. The crowd was about to rush upon the captain, and perhaps he would have received much rougher treatment than a mere snow-balling, but Rose Carew burst through the ring and upbraided them for such conduct.

"This is the act of cowards," she said. "If you

must do violence, why not go forth and fight the savages?"

The point of her remarks reached them, and they saw, too, the humour of what she said. Moreover, our Kentuckians are an impulsive race, and if there is one quality more strongly developed than another in them it is deference to womanhood. Captain Hardy, defended by Rose Carew, was as safe as if he sat undisturbed in his own home.

"I think you are upon a poor business," she continued, "and there are some among you who have set themselves to another task still poorer. I know of it, I have heard of it, and I tell you to take care lest you do yourselves a mischief."

She paused and looked around, her face glowing, and her look was so accusing that the gaze of none in that crowd could stand before it. I made no movement then, because I was occupied with admiration of her quick and generous action. To me a beautiful woman is more beautiful than ever when she is moved by noble anger.

"This man to whom you would do harm," she continued, "is far braver than any among you. He was in that battle on the Wabash, and he risked his life many times. I was there and I know. Which of you has done as much?"

They gave no answer and began to scatter in the town, though not neglecting to applaud her as they went. Such was their impulse.

Captain Hardy took off his hat, which he had replaced, and which was somewhat indented by its contact with hardened snow. Nevertheless, its damaged condition did not affect his politeness.

"It is pleasant at any time to be saved, Miss Carew," he said, "but when one has so fair a rescuer one knows not what to say."

"Then say nothing," she replied, and she laughed—

I think it came as a relief to her tense feelings. Then she turned to me.

"Why did you not stop them, Mr. Lee?" she asked.

I reddened. I could not deny that I had been somewhat slack in moving to Captain Hardy's relief.

"You did not give me the opportunity," I said. "You were so much readier than I."

She accepted my apology, but whether satisfied with it or not I did not know. Then we walked on with Captain Hardy, and he told us that the Government must have volunteers to protect the border, since the President could send no more troops at present. I gave him some hint of the state of public opinion in Kentucky, a hint that perhaps he did not need after his recent experience, and in a few minutes he left us, as his time was pressing. I, too, had begun to excuse myself, but Miss Carew asked me to go with her to her father's house, and I could not refuse.

"Why have you not come there since our return?" she asked.

"I did not know that I would be welcome," I replied. "My cousin Jasper is here now, and he is able to do all the honours of the Lee family."

"Your cousin Jasper is himself, not you," she said, "and I tell you, Mr. Lee, that you are cherishing a false pride. No man is more honoured here than you. Why should you keep yourself from the public view? You might become a great figure in this new land."

"I do not wish it," I said, and I was sincere then.

Her face was grave and sad, the flush of strenuous action having passed.

"You wrong yourself," she continued. "Kentucky occupies a position of much danger, and it needs men of tenacity and steady conduct. Your voice might do much good here."

"It would not be listened to."

"You do not know that. Your help is needed in

Kentucky as much as it was back there in the wilderness with St. Clair. Do you think that I am blind and deaf because I am a woman? I know the feeling that has arisen here, and how artful men are fomenting it for their own selfish ends. I think they are the worst of traitors to take advantage of such a time when we are under misfortune, and the minds of men turn naturally to new things."

She spoke the condemnation of her own father, and because she used such words I was persuaded that she did not know of his complicity.

"You will not have a part in any such affair," she said to me.

"Did you think that I would share it?" I asked.

She replied in the negative, and I saw that she was sincere. Then she began to talk freely, and it was a relief to her to make this confidence. I repeat that women are better patriots than men, because their patriotism is never tinctured with calculation; it is always sentimental and of the heart, like their love for husband or child. Because they had suffered much in behalf of the country, and had received no reward, the Kentuckians, she thought, ought to stand all the more firmly in its defence. Were she a man she would help Captain Hardy in his mission to the utmost of her ability. I should mention here that even as a woman she was of great aid to him, perhaps greater than if she had been a man. While she spoke thus I resolved to keep her ignorant of her father's duplicity and complicity if I could. I believed that he talked one way to her, and another to Knowlton and Curry and their like.

The night following this conversation was cold and dark, and wearying of the little inn at which I stayed, perforce, for lack of a better place, I strolled outside for the sake of the brisk air so necessary now to me, a man of the wilderness. I looked at the forms of the buildings rising obscurely, and the dozen lights or so, twin-

kling here and there; then I looked at the dim figure of old Joe Grimes hastening past. I knew his slouch in an instant despite the darkness, and I hailed him.

"Why such a hurry, Joe, at this time of the night?" I asked.

"Ask no questions an' you'll get no lies," he replied, and was for passing on; but I seized him by the arm, and as I was the stronger man he was compelled to stop. Joe Grimes was always a poor dissembler, and I knew by the tone of his response that mischief was afoot.

"Joe," I said, "you are about to do something of which you are ashamed."

He flushed guiltily and then grew angry, endeavouring to snatch himself loose, although I held to his arm.

"What's my business to do is yours to let alone," he said. "You've been a good comrade of mine, John Lee, but I've lived in the wilderness a long time, and I don't mean to begin asking you now if I may go out in the dark by myself."

But I knew him thoroughly, and therefore I could afford to talk to him as I did.

"Joe," I said, "you've never needed to ask me before, but you do now. I told you the other day that you could not be a villain, but you can be a fool, and you are proving it."

He pulled loose from me with an oath and hurried away. That he was troubled by a guilty conscience I felt sure, or he would not have been so impatient about it, and I was moved to follow him; an impulse that I obeyed, and I felt right in doing so. He walked toward a small wooden building in the outskirts of the town, which I recognised as the home of Underwood's little school. It was unlighted, but when old Joe knocked on the door he was admitted, and I formed at once the conclusion that the conspirators were meeting there. I was alarmed. I had not really believed that the matter would go so far, and the fact that Rose Carew's

father, led on by some fantastic dream, was among these men did not lessen my trouble. I was amazed, too, that the schoolmaster should be one of them. I did not think him so bold.

I lingered there long, trying to decide what I ought to do, or rather what I would do. It was my duty to denounce these men and to put a stop by what means I could to their treasonable plottings. And yet I hesitated; they would retort upon me with that old conviction of mine; they would say that there is nothing like the zeal of the converted, and that I was trying to win credit by accusing others of what I had done. And there, too, was Rose Carew's father.

I was aroused from my doubts by a light step, and I beheld the schoolmaster, Underwood himself, approaching. My impulse when I saw him was one of distinct aversion. I remembered the epithet that had been applied to him—the basest of all names upon the border, "coward"—and now to find him a conspirator also, sneaking through the darkness, was too much for my feelings.

"You are late for your wicked work, Mr. Coward," I said to myself, "and 'tis no wonder; cowards usually are."

I expected him to glide past me like a shadow, sure that a schoolmaster's eyes would not note me in that darkness; instead, he turned and came straight to me.

"Have you seen any one go into that house, Mr. Lee?" he asked, pointing toward the school building.

"Yes, Mr. Underwood," I replied; "all your fellow-plotters are there; they wait for you only; you should hasten."

"I do not understand you," he said.

I laughed. I felt in a bitter humour, and this man rubbed me the wrong way.

"I ask you to come with me, Mr. Lee," he said with

sudden vigour. "I wish you to be a witness of what is about to occur."

He put his hand upon my arm, and his fingers felt like iron. The man's manner changed, and his eager face, which was close to mine, showed strength. There was mastery, too, in his eyes, and I yielded to his request without a word.

We approached the house, and he knocked upon the door. It was opened but a few inches, and some one was about to ask the name of him who came, but Underwood pushed past him, and I followed.

It was an odd place in which to hold such a meeting, but perhaps the best that could be found in Danville, as it was untenanted at night. It was a single room with wooden benches for the pupils, and a split-bottomed chair, beside which stood a little table, for the teacher. The room was lighted by one window, the clapboard shutter of which was now closed, keeping any ray of the dim candle that burned on the table from reaching the outside. In the room were Mr. Carew, Jasper, Knowlton, Curry, Harvey, old Joe Grimes, and a half-dozen others. Faint as the light was, I saw a look of apprehension upon all their faces, when we entered, but it disappeared gradually.

"I see that you have reconsidered, Lee," said Mr. Carew in familiar tones. "You do well."

It was my intent to answer him, but I lacked opportunity because the schoolmaster spoke with such quickness.

"You do not do well, Mr. Carew," he said. "You do ill to turn such a place as this into a nest for conspirators."

"Be quiet, Underwood," said Curry fiercely, with a snap of his aggressive jaws. "You are but a teacher in this house, and you do not own it."

Curry was a man of influence and wealth in the community, and Underwood was in a measure dependent

upon him for his place. But the schoolmaster was not daunted. He might be a physical but certainly he was not a moral coward, and at that moment I admired him.

His long thin finger swayed a little as he spoke, but his eyes, which had appeared dull to me before, were burning.

"I know the purpose for which you have come here," he said, and his eyes roved from one to the other of the conspirators, "and if these proceedings are not stopped at once I shall denounce you. There is law in Kentucky for such things as this, and there are plenty of men who will enforce it. None of you is so high that he may not be brought down."

As he said these last words he shook his finger in the face of Curry, who sprang to his feet with an oath, his face as red as blood, ready to strike at the accuser had not Mr. Carew pulled him down.

"Underwood is excited," said Mr. Carew, easily and smoothly. "Too much reading of books has given him a vain imagination. We are here to discuss measures for the protection of the border as becomes good citizens, and the schoolmaster's fancy attributes to us some strange purpose of which perhaps no one ever dreamed."

"That, Mr. Carew," said Underwood, "is a clumsy falsehood."

But Mr. Carew yet kept his temper. Nature had fitted him to be an intriguer.

"Will you kindly give me the name of your tipple, Underwood?" he said, "because when I wish to see things which are not of this earth I shall have merely to taste it."

But Underwood was not abashed. He spoke again vehemently, and I was surprised at his eloquence. Nor was its effect lost.

"You can not deceive me, Mr. Carew," he said.

"You do not even persuade yourself that you have done so. I know well what has brought you here, and if you do not put an immediate end to such proceedings I swear that I will arouse Kentucky against you!"

It was then that Jasper spoke. He had been sitting at his ease, his expression slightly satirical.

"I am glad, Mr. Underwood," he said, "that in your great task of casting out devils you have brought with you my good cousin, John Lee. It is said in the wise book that he who is without sin should cast the first stone, and so, what more fitting than that John Lee should accuse this worthy company of gentlemen?"

I was about to speak, but again the schoolmaster was too quick for me.

"I know John Lee's history," he said, "and I know too that he is loved by the people of this land whom he has served well. He shall tell with me to-morrow what he has seen and what he knows. And I warn you, Jasper Lee, that the people of Kentucky will pay much more heed to his words than they will to yours."

Jasper shrank a little, but in a moment or two recovered his coolness.

"Shall we proceed with our discussion, Mr. Carew, when our unbidden guests withdraw?" he asked.

I noticed that the young man Harvey was moving uneasily, and his weak mouth was trembling. I judged that his spirit inclined him to leave them, but Curry suddenly clapped a heavy hand upon his shoulder, and he collapsed as if the touch of that hand had bent him to the will of the older man.

"Come, Mr. Underwood," I said, putting my hand upon the arm of the schoolmaster, "you have delivered your message here, and none could have done the task with more spirit and directness. Let us go."

He walked to the door with me, but he turned there and said, with much solemnity, to the assembly in the room:

"You have had your warning. Heed it!"

Then we went out together, and we heard them closing and barring the door behind us.

CHAPTER XXI

PLAIN TALK

THE night was not dark, a clear moon sailing in silver skies, and a skim of snow covering the earth. The wind too was softened, having shifted to the southwest, and the air felt pleasant. So the schoolmaster and I strolled on together, and for a little while were silent. I was attracted to him at that moment despite his reputation for physical cowardice. In truth he had shown none in the presence of the conspirators, and he had been so bold there and had cut so directly to the marrow of the matter that I could find it in my heart to forgive him for a defect, the cause of which was nature.

I glanced once at his face, pale usually, but lighted now by an inward fire, and I asked:

"What made you go there to-night and speak to those men as you did, Mr. Underwood?"

"It is because I love my country, and would see no part of it wanting in its duty," he replied. "This talk of a Western empire is but a dream, as vague and unsubstantial as any that ever passed in Hamlet's mind. The people do not want it, nor in truth do those men themselves in the house back yonder. They are filled with anger against the East, because of the great disaster that has befallen us and the criminal folly of St. Clair; so they say words to-day which they do not mean to-morrow. Even among those conspirators there are but two, perhaps three, who are really dangerous—Mr. Carew, because he has seen the Old World and dreams

of the honours and station which the republic of the New can not give; and Curry, who is one of those foolish men, so headstrong that they can see only what they desire at the moment. The third, the doubtful character, is your cousin Jasper, whom I can not fathom."

"How did you know of this plan?" I asked.

"Know of it?" he said, and he laughed for the first time. "They have scarce sought to conceal it. We are breeding here, Mr. Lee, a race hasty and hot, but true of heart. It is not a race that will ever go masked. What it intends to do it will announce to all the world; and if the intent is bad, frequently it will not do it."

I saw that he was moved by strong emotion, and I was glad to hear him talk. Why he had chosen to say these things to me I did not know, but I believed it to be the accident of the moment—he was a recluse, even under a ban, as it were—and he wished to speak his feelings to some one. I had known the desire myself, and I had known, too, what an effort it was to crush it.

He laid much of his soul bare to me, and then I found that he, too, dreamed dreams. He would see the republic spread across all this Western country, and the fertile lands become the home of a great race.

"As for their wars with the savages," he said, "they are terrible for the moment, but they will pass; the Indians are like a cork that the wave of the whites picks up and carries on. I feel sorrow for them—at times—but what else can happen?"

I had listened to the dream of another man, not long ago—the dream of the great Miami chief, Mechecunnaqua, and his mind then seemed to me to be like Underwood's now; but it was not possible that both dreams should come true—the one destroyed the other.

His had been a silent tongue. I knew by the way his words flowed now when the check was once removed. His pale face was illumined more and more by the vividness of his thoughts. Kentucky, he said, which

was about to become a State, should feel an increase of honour, because of her great sufferings. It would be said of her hereafter that she was the mother of the West; it had been her duty as the first outpost beyond the mountains to fight for all that vast empire, and so far she had not failed; now, when the Government in the East was weak, it behooved the people in Kentucky to prove themselves strong, and, as much as they could, redress the balance.

He found in me a willing listener. I could not contradict anything that he said, nor, in truth, did I seek to do so; it was my wish rather that we had among us more such as he. But when he ceased I made one request of him.

"Will you not, as far as you may, keep Mr. Carew's complicity hidden from his daughter?" I asked.

He looked intently at me, and I felt my face redden through the tan. But there was a rare smile in his eyes when he gave my hand a hearty clasp and said:

"It is right that you should make this request, John Lee; and Miss Carew, whose truth is enough to redeem her father's falsity, shall be protected, if it lies within my power."

I thanked him, but he had not come to the end.

"I have more to say," he continued, "and do not censure me if I use plain speech, because it is of your interest that I am thinking. You love Rose Carew. Nay, man, do not flush and grow angry; it is nothing of which one need be ashamed. Why not stay here and win her, and become a great man in this new State? It lies within your power."

"Which?" I asked, "to win Miss Carew or to rise to a place of importance?"

"Both," he replied, and his eyes would not turn aside from the gaze of mine.

"She could only feel aversion for me," I said, "and even were it not so, how can I ask her to unite her

pure life with that of a man whose history is like mine? My place is there," and I pointed toward the northwest, where the great wilderness lay.

"The past is the past; it is not the present," he said.

"No, but the present is based upon it, and grows out of it."

He said nothing more upon the subject, and presently we parted. I awoke early the next morning, wondering what course Underwood would take, and in some fear, too, on Rose Carew's account. But freshly returned to her people from captivity, it seemed hard to me that she should now hear her father called a traitor.

CHAPTER XXII

A MESSENGER FROM THE NORTH

THE morning was quiet and Danville seemed peaceful. I met Jasper, and he nodded as if nothing had occurred to disturb the placid course of events. Yet this quiet was of short duration, although its end came in a way that I did not expect.

A messenger, riding hard, arrived in Danville shortly before the noon hour, and he had news that made women and many a man, too, shudder. The tribes, flushed by their great success, and scorning midwinter, had crossed the Ohio in force, and already the torch and tomahawk were busy in Kentucky. The band numbered many hundreds of warriors, the messenger said, and Hoyoquim again led. They had burst in a flood of fire upon the undefended settlements, and along a line of many miles the bodies of women and children lay amid smoking ruins.

The messenger was but one of those who rode throughout the land for help, and it was a message that in the last fifteen years or more, or since the first house was built at Boonesborough, had been borne often through the settlements, and here, after the first shock, it was received with the usual stoicism of the border. To fight the savages, to be on guard against a treacherous and cruel foe, seemed to our people an eternal condition, and they did not complain. Nor was there any delay in the answer to the cry for help. A few minutes after the messenger came I met old Joe Grimes.

His excitement was visible, his eyes flaming with it, and he clapped one hand heavily upon my shoulder, pointing with the other toward the north.

"They are calling for us there, John!" he cried. "We must make haste! They need us! It's the people of the West now who must do the work; they've got to save Kentucky and the Northwest for the republic!"

I looked him squarely in the eyes, but he did not see the humour of his words.

"And if you are to save the West for the republic what is to become of the great conspiracy in which you are such a master figure, Joe?" I asked. "Surely you have not forgotten your Western empire?"

"That Spanish business?" he said. "Oh, I've changed my mind. I'll never put my arm out farther than I can draw it back; besides, I haven't time."

Then he was off in a moment seeking for volunteers to go against the tribes. It was the note of the war trumpet ringing in his ears that had changed his mind overnight. He was willing to conspire as long as his anger lasted, but he was not willing that others should do the same, and now at the cry for help he hurried to the defence of his chosen land. Curry and Harvey showed the same spirit, and it was obvious that the Indian alarm had blown away many noxious vapours, serving at least one good purpose. The little town was soon full of men coming with rifle and ammunition pouch, and ready to march northward against the foe. There would be no lack of zeal.

I went in the afternoon to see Rose Carew, having formed a project, the execution of which I had at heart. She received me in a manner most grateful to me, as it indicated that my coming was not unpleasant, and I felt at ease in her presence. She too had heard of the message brought across the Ohio, and her woman's heart thrilled with sympathy for those exposed to the tomahawk, a feeling all the greater because she herself had

been under the edge of that weapon, and knew its terrors. And she showed a spirit like unto that of Underwood. Kentucky must go to the relief, and go at once. Naught else could be thought of at such a time. When the East was loaded down with its own troubles the West must show how it could defend not only itself, but the interests of the republic to which it belonged. She took it for granted that I should go, not only willing, but eager to accept such an opportunity, and it was then that I approached my subject.

"In truth I shall go," I said. "I had no thought of anything else; and I should be glad if I were in a command with your father, Mr. Carew. He is sure to distinguish himself."

She gave me a look of surprise.

"I did not know that he was going," she said. "Perhaps he is—is old for such an arduous campaign."

I saw clearly that she did not wish Mr. Carew to join the expedition, but I was resolved that he should; it seemed to me a loophole for escape from many dangers, and so I ridiculed the idea of his being too old, as, in truth, I had a right to do, since he was not past fifty, and in the height of health and vigour. I told, without direct reference to him, what an obligation lay upon every man to go for the defence of the border; even the thought of that poor invalid wife did not deter me, and I saw conviction growing upon her face. As I have said before, I think that women are the truest patriots of all, and if one woman sends her son or husband to war another may well send her father.

"You will see that he comes back to us again, will you not, Mr. Lee?" she said, as I was about to leave. "You have done us one service, and I do not hesitate to ask for another."

"Mr. Carew is able to care for himself," I replied,

"but if he should need help he shall have all that I can give."

The glow of gratitude appeared in her eyes, but she said only:

"I shall look first for his coming, Mr. Lee, and then for yours."

When I went from her presence I felt much joy, mingled with much pain. The old disgrace was now all the more bitter to bear because, had it not been, I believed that the way I longed most to tread might be open for me. I was a fool, I told myself, to be thinking of the curve of a girl's eyebrow, and I turned at once to sterner matters.

In the short time left to me I assiduously spread the report that Mr. Carew was eager to go against the savages, as he had great interests in Kentucky, and on that account felt the weight of his obligation to assist in the defence. So when they came to him and gave compliments to his zeal he was somewhat taken aback; but seeing no way of escape with honour, made the best of it, and pretended to the zeal that he did not feel. There was in him something of Jasper's shifty character, though the grain of it was better. Jasper himself had made a hasty journey to Lexington, and he slipped through our sieve.

The expedition drawn from many parts of Kentucky started in three days, so rapid were our preparations, but it was none too soon, as the entire border lay under the tomahawk, and the tale of slaughter did not cease to come.

Ours was a little army in which every man commanded himself. We had colonels and captains selected by ourselves whom we could turn into privates when we chose, and who could give advice which might or might not be taken. In truth, we represented the sort of government in which Joe Grimes believed—every man for himself, and "devil take the hindmost." All

were brave and strong, sons of the forest, who knew the Indian trail when they saw it, and were confident of their own powers.

As we advanced rapidly northward our numbers increased, and it was a picturesque little force variously clad and well armed. These men, with their fiery spirit and eager desire to close with the foe, presented a striking contrast to the drooping army of St. Clair which had perished in the great woods.

The zeal and rage of the borderers increased as we approached the Ohio. The full tale of slaughter had not been told. The tomahawk was flashing along a line of two hundred miles, and the savages were showing no mercy. We talked of these things, and the desire for revenge burned in every bosom. Hoyoquim's army, in great force, it was said, was besieging Winston's Station, near the Ohio, and increasing our speed again, we hastened to its relief. When within one day's march of the Station, Osseo joined us, coming into camp at daybreak, and taking his place without a word beside me at the camp fire. Nor did I speak for a half hour, merely helping him to food and waiting until in his own good time he should choose to talk. Then he looked around at our motley little army and said:

"In the camp of the General-who-never-walks the fire burned too low; here it burns too high."

I sighed. I could not help it. I had seen already the fault of which Osseo spoke, but I was reluctant to mention it. Sanguine of success and eager to show the regular troops how superior the borderers were in the conduct of Indian war, they thought only of finding the foe. Osseo said no more, and while we sat in silence another approached us, and to my surprise it was Underwood.

"How happens it that you are here, Mr. Underwood?" I asked, and then I would have given much had I not spoken the question, as his face flushed a little,

and plainly he knew the cause of my surprise. But he answered:

"My errand is the same as yours, Mr. Lee. I come to fight the savages."

His face, the flush departing now, seemed paler to me than ever, but the spirit I saw that night when he denounced the conspirators burned in his eyes.

"I am not much of a forester," he said, "and I know little of Indian war, but it is not a time when any of us should shun the conflict."

I welcomed him at our fireside, and Osseo gave his approval. I felt an increasing liking for this man. It seemed to me a fine thing that he should so far overcome his physical impulses that he could force himself to come upon such service. I not only liked him, I admired him. His delay in joining us, I learned, was due to an effort to raise additional volunteers.

Our halt was brief, and as we approached Winston Station a messenger informed us that the heroic band of defenders from the cover of their wooden walls had repulsed every attack of the savage army, which was now retiring, in fear of our advance. Then our men shouted their joy, and their fiery zeal swelled higher and higher. They would follow the horde of Hoyoquim and destroy it. Now, they said, the difference between soldiers and borderers was plain to every one; even the savages were aware of it, and while they would never retire in the face of the regulars they knew too much to await the attack of the true foresters.

"Across the Ohio and after them!" was the universal shout, and all were eager to strike a blow which should balance the defeat of St. Clair. Curry sprang upon a log and made a speech full of heat. The man in truth had a rude eloquence, and it was sufficient for his hearers. We pressed forward at once upon the trail of

the savage army, crossing the Ohio, and after passing a low range of hills we entered a beautiful prairie country.

The air turned warm; the light snow melted and, despite lingering winter, the grass and foliage showed here and there.

CHAPTER XXIII

AT THE FORD

THE next day was one of those strange days that we have sometimes in the Western lands between the great colds. The grass bent in little waves like the ripples on a river, and the brown tint of leaf and stem was almost lost in the golden flush of the sun. The wind that came over the brow of a hill fanned our faces like a perfumed breath, and all around us was a flood of colour, the gold of the sunbeams softened by the snowy white clouds through which they came.

I turned my face to the wind and inhaled its breath. It filled my lungs, and heart and brain alike expanded. I felt again the joy of the wilderness. I could understand the philosophy of the old Greeks who believed in fauns and satyrs, and that in the morning of time we roamed the scented woods, happy and harmless.

Our course now took us toward a river which flowed into the Ohio, and presently we saw in the distance the faint line of its stream. The condition of the trail showed that we were advancing faster than the Indian army, and we increased our speed again.

The river grew broader, and its silver shaded into deeper blue. A haze of hills beyond it became purple, and the line of a distant forest cut the sky like a sabre's edge.

We halted presently, and I looked around at my comrades, who had gathered in a great group, on foot and on horseback, two hundred strong men, faces

darkened and seamed by sun, wind, and rain, figures spare but nervous and powerful, some clad in homespun, others in tanned deerskin trimmed with long fringe and little coloured beads which flashed in red and blue and yellow as the sunbeams fell upon them. All carried the Western rifle, conspicuous with its quaintly carved stock and long, slender barrel of blue steel. Looking upon them, I was proud of my comrades, though I did not forget Osseo's warning of "too much fire."

The leaders now talked together a little, and I preached caution.

"Caution!" cried Curry; "while we are lingering here the savages are escaping."

His words, not mine, were grateful in the ears of the men. So I stepped aside.

"Do you think we'll overtake them this side of the river?" asked Joe Grimes of me.

I looked at the long stretch of forest and the blue band of the stream, and saw nothing but peace and stillness, save where our men gathered. The outline of purple hills beyond the river showed no change. But through the deep grass led the trail of many footsteps which were not a puzzle to me, for as my eyes turned away from the forests and the water, I bent over and examined the traces with a trained eye. Then I shook my head and Underwood signified his agreement.

"I believe they will make their stand at the river," he said. "That is the best place for them."

I thought him right, and even old Joe in his confidence seemed to have lost his habitual caution. He and the others feared only that the warriors would not wait for us, that the rapidity of their flight would leave us behind, no matter how strenuously we pursued, and they were consumed with impatience at the delay. Some had talked of caution, of the superior numbers of the warriors, and the danger of ambush, but the great ma-

jority laughed at the conservatives, and did not hesitate to call them unpleasant names.

"There are a thousand of the warriors, and we are but two hundred," said Underwood as we stood there. "We ought to wait for re-enforcements."

Old Joe flamed out at him and boldly called him a coward. I felt pity for the man, and told Grimes that he should be ashamed of himself, but I was unheeded. Underwood did not resent the affront, merely turning away.

The council ended and our leaders rode toward the river, thus giving the sign that we should continue the pursuit. A fierce shout of approval arose, and then we poured forward in a picturesque stream, the sun flashing over the rifle barrels and the brown, eager faces, the beads on leggings and moccasins shimmering in many colours.

The river, first seen a silver thread in the morning, was now a dark-blue sheet of water, and very near; yet I looked little at it, keeping my eyes on the line of the woods which filed past on either side of us. I searched them continually for the glimpse of a brown form or the steel of a rifle barrel glinting as some stray sunbeam struck upon it. The traces that we were following led straight toward the river, yet it seemed natural in me to watch everywhere for an ambush. The lightest sounds came to my ears, and I felt a familiarity with all the phases of the wilderness. This was home.

But the woods were silent and unoccupied. My eyes could find nothing there. The peace was the same that had hung over the land in the morning. A redbird glowing in his deepest scarlet sat on a bough just over my head, and did not move as we passed.

We reached the river and stopped upon its bank, staring at the line of bare hills on the farther shore, the hills that had shone deep blue in the distance and then purple. We were astonished for the moment, and our

little army, breathing deeply, expressed its opinions with freedom.

We could not see a human being on the other side. The Indian force which the men had expected with such confidence to find waiting for us there was gone. Even then it might be far on its way toward the deeper wilderness, and many hearts beat with fierce anger at its escape.

Again I eagerly searched the line of silent hills, but saw nothing. The blue bluffs and the white stone gleamed in the sun, and there was the river, flowing in blue where the channel was deep, but rippling in silver bubbles and white foam over the shallows. The peace of the world was still about us, and the little white clouds sailed calmly on in turquoise heavens.

"If necessary we should follow them even to the lakes," said Joe Grimes to me.

"But it will not be necessary," I replied. "Look!"

Two Indians had appeared on one of the hills beyond the river. They were Shawnee warriors in all the glory and hideousness of their war-paint, each carrying a rifle in his hand. They came a little nearer, and sitting on a rock looked intently at us. There was something particularly insulting in their stare, their air of unconcern, even disdain, and the angry blood flew to my head.

"Scouts or skirmishers," said Grimes.

"Yes," I replied, "and they are daring us to cross and attack them."

"We'll be cowards if we don't," he said.

"Joe," I said, "remember one of your own favourite sayings—'Never bite off more'n you can chew.'"

He gave an angry snort, but did not answer me. Then he raised his rifle, but it was too far for a shot. Others too had made threatening motions with their weapons, but the warriors either knew that they were safe or scorned them. One ran his fingers carelessly through his long scalp-lock, and then leaned back against the rock as if he would go to sleep.

Our leaders drew together again, and there was much talk. But I foresaw the result of it. There was the long, easy slope worn by the crossing of buffalo herds, and a dash into the fordable river would soon put us on the other side.

The talk continued. Underwood, unabashed by the name of coward, which had been applied more than once to him, pushed into the circle and advised them not to attempt the passage of the river in the face of the Indian army. Some voices were raised in his support, mine among them, but the others turned upon him and rebuffed him so hardly that he withdrew and stood at a little distance, leaning upon his gun. Even those who shared his opinions would not be his friends because everybody knew that he was a coward. I watched his face, but if he felt shame he did not show it. I could not understand him; a man might be a coward, but I had never before heard of one who did not try to hide the fact. Once Underwood's eyes met mine, but they seemed to take no note of my look, and passed on toward the river and the two warriors who sat on the hill, combing their scalp-locks with their fingers.

The younger men were nearest the river, and they moved about in their impatience, swearing now and then under their breath, the metal of the guns clicking against metal. The scent of the great woods that had followed me all the morning came to me still. The same little white clouds sailed peacefully past the sun and left the huge coppery ball to shoot its rays upon us.

I looked at the debating leaders, and then turned my gaze back to the hill. I saw the Indians sitting upon the rocks and then I did not see them. I rubbed my eyes to remove the film which had dimmed my vision, for I could not believe that they had gone, thinking it only an illusion. The rubbing did not bring the warriors back. I saw the bare, blue hill, its outlines cutting the sky as sharply as ever, the stone outcropping seeming to

smoulder in the sun, but it was lone and desolate, as if men had never been there.

"See, they have fled!" shouted old Joe; "the band is afraid of us!"

Again the cry that we follow at once was raised. I saw Underwood's lips move as if he were about to utter another protest, and I wondered at the man's hardihood and lack of shame. But he crushed the impulse, and closing his lips tightly, remained leaning upon his rifle's muzzle and intently regarding the leaders.

Most of our band had closed around those who were to decide our course, urging their older comrades to delay no longer and lead them forward in the pursuit, if they were really brave men. It was a circle of hot, red faces, angry eyes, and swaying forms. Suddenly one of the officers on horseback, a large man with the reddest face of all—Curry himself—pushed his horse out of the circle and rode toward the ford. He paused near the brink, wheeled his horse about until he faced us, and cried in a voice that was a mixture of swagger, courage, and scorn:

"All who are not cowards follow me!"

Then he wheeled again and galloped into the river.

His taunt was the touch of fire to dry grass, and we poured after him, a tumultuous horde, horse and foot alike eager to be first at the crossing, leaders now as wild as the men with enthusiasm. I was in the front, but I did not forget to look again at Underwood and see whether he would go or stay. He kept pace with the rear ranks, and then I lost him as I dashed into the stream. These were my comrades, and I could not leave them.

The water rose to my waist, and for the moment I was blinded by the foam and spray kicked up by so many men and horses. A clamour of shouting and splashing water rose around me, but I cleared my eyes, and holding up my gun and powder to keep them dry, pushed for

the farther shore, stumbling over the boulders and the uneven bottom.

The river was neither deep nor wide here, and its waters were churned up now by many feet, and men and horses blocked the way. A horse fell with a great splash, and he and his rider struggled up again, everybody giving way and deepening the confusion. I looked at the blue hills, and I was alive with apprehension. It was here that we expected the Indian army to make its stand, disputing with us the passage of the river, and if the warriors were to give us a fight at all it seemed to me that this was the best place for it. I expected them each moment to appear on the summits and pour a deadly fire upon us as we struggled in the river, but the hills remained as bare as ever, shining in the sun, and there were no sounds save those that we made.

Our wet and wild little army, thinking nothing of the cold, pulled itself out of the water and stood upon dry land, triumphant, the obstacle that we feared most overcome, our foes still fleeing the sight of our faces.

The sun was rapidly drying our clothes, though wet or dry it was a matter to which the men gave little thought, as we climbed the hills and stood upon their summits, seeing only the wilderness before us. But the scouts soon found the trail of the warriors, leading on straight ahead, and we followed. I confess that I too shared somewhat in the enthusiasm of the moment.

The ground remained rough, and we proceeded along the crest of a ridge that ran back at an angle from the river. The confused talk ceased now, and we heard only the footsteps and heavy breathing of men and horses, upon whom the long pursuit was beginning to tell. As we left the river the open nature of the country ceased, thickets of bushes and clumps of trees appearing, while farther on curved the wilderness.

I watched the dark line of the forest, sure that it now hid the fleeing warriors.

The ridge broadened a little, and seemed to extend to the distant woods in which we believed the Indian army to have sought refuge, offering us an easy path of pursuit along its crest. Full of zeal and spirit, the borderers forgot now the weariness which had begun to creep over them, and pressed on with rising ardour. I was in the front rank, keeping pace with the horsemen, and I watched the forest as it rose like a wall from the earth, ending in a sharp black line against the blue sky. A tremulous haze like that of Indian summer hung over it, and it seemed to form so secure a covert that I wondered if we should ever be able to find our enemy in its depths.

Osseo was by my side, saying nothing, though I knew well his thoughts. We had sunk into silence now, our course decided, and no breath to spare for talking. The ridge flattened out somewhat, and I noticed that it was cut on either side by a great gully, filled with a dense growth of bushes.

We halted here a moment to examine the trail, which seemed to veer about as if the warriors had become uncertain in their flight, and I glanced toward the ravine on my right and its thickets of bushes. My eyes lingered there a moment, and were passing on when they were caught by something and turned back. It was a metallic gleam, a flash quick but bright, like the sparkle of a firefly in the dark, that drew me, and I looked for it again.

That passing gleam of steel was not more sudden than my comprehension of it, of its awful nature, of the catastrophe. I knew that it was a flash of sunlight falling across the polished barrel of a rifle. I knew that a thousand sharpshooters lay concealed in the bushes of those two ravines, and we—rash fools!—had marched directly between, making of ourselves a target as full and fair as the most ferocious warrior could covet. What right had we now to taunt St. Clair?

Involuntarily I seized the arm of Osseo in so fierce a grasp that he turned upon me in surprise. This movement of my hand, this succession of vehement emotions, passed in a second, and I opened my mouth to shout the warning, but it was never uttered.

The cry was checked at my lips by a burst of fire on either side of us, like the two long, flaming edges of a sword. The red blaze seemed to reach from either ravine to our faces, and inclosed us in a rim of death. The crack of hundreds of rifles uniting made a roar as of cannon, columns of smoke arose, and the odour of burned gunpowder snuffed out the perfume of the wilderness.

The flame of the rifles fired so close flashed in our faces. The cry of death mingled with the cry of pain. Our little band reeled under the leaden sleet and dripped blood. Horses and men dropped together and the screams of wounded animals added to the confused and terrible uproar.

I was used to Indian warfare, but this was so quick that for the moment I was dazed. It scarce seemed real.

A man beside me suddenly asked what we ought to do. I was about to reply, but before I could speak a word he fell dead at my feet, struck between the eyes by a rifle ball.

A wounded horse, shrieking in pain, plunged past me, and fell among the bushes from which the red sharpshooters were pouring their fire.

The paralysis of the terrible surprise was still upon us, the fire which scorched us from all sides still drove us toward a common centre, the huddle of man and horses becoming every moment denser and more confused. Some of us were firing at random into the encircling rim of smoke. Men would pitch out of the mass and fall headlong to the ground where they lay; most of our leaders were killed already, many of those who still stood were bleeding from wounds, and all the time our

ears were filled with the fierce, triumphant peal of the war-whoop.

They pressed closer and closer upon us, five times as numerous, with all the advantage of a surprise and the first volleys, using every bush and tree and stone as shelter, until sometimes we saw only the curling smoke and the dim outlines of the undergrowth.

I looked at our blood-stained group, the brilliant deerskin tunics dyed now with many a red stream, and still saw upon many faces that dim look of surprised horror, of vague dismay, borderers though they were. All the grass was torn up by our tramplings, and upon either side of us the bank of smoke had become a solid mass, through which the steady fire of the rifles blazed in hundreds of red streaks.

A warrior dashed out of the smoke, and bending over a fallen man, drew his knife to scalp him. One of our band raised his rifle and shot the savage. That seemed to arouse our army from its apathy of despair, and with a universal impulse we turned our faces toward the river, which we had crossed so gaily a few minutes before. The thought in every mind then—and they were brave men—was flight. Those who have never been surprised by the appearance of death when least expected—death in its most terrible form—may boast of their courage, not otherwise. Ours were the best men of the border, and yet for a little while the panic was the same as that of St. Clair's day.

The warriors, when they saw the attempt of their victims to break from the trap, began to shout more fiercely than ever, and increased the vigour of their fire. The clouds of smoke grew thicker and blacker, the volleys flashed faster, and the bullets, when they did not strike flesh and bone, whistled incessantly in our ears. The men choked with the smoke and were blinded by it; they stumbled over bushes and their comrades, and had no means of knowing which way they were going,

save that instinct was carrying them toward the river, now become somehow in their imagination a line of safety. Yet through all the horrible tumult, the smoke, the blaze and rattle of the firing, the groans of the wounded and the death cries, the force of old teaching and habits prevailed; the borderers mechanically loaded their rifles, and as fast as the bullets were rammed home fired into the encircling walls of smoke.

Our band, though confused, was still a compact mass, held together by the enemy, who was pressing so fiercely upon us from all sides, but the terror of death and the love of life were urging us on. We wanted to get away from those rifles that were stinging us, from that enemy hidden in his veil of smoke who found us a perfect target, while we could only see figures appearing and reappearing with the quickness of shadows on a screen.

The mass of slowly moving white men in the centre of this ring of death suddenly heaved up and broke from a walk into a run toward the river. The warriors had not closed in entirely on what had been the rear of our army, and there the line of flitting phantoms was weakest. We drove at the place where the smoke was thinnest, leaving behind us our dead, firing the loaded rifles, clubbing at savage heads with the unloaded, shouting in rage, resembling nothing so much as a buffalo with weakening strength and torn flanks surrounded by a herd of fierce and famished wolves.

The fever rose into my eyes and brain. I became a savage myself. The barrel of my rifle, hot with the frequent discharges, burned my hand; once when I touched my face it felt as hot as the rifle barrel. The blood in my eyes and the drifting smoke enlarged and distorted everything, and the faces of my comrades became as wild and savage as my own. Everything had over it the tinge of bloody redness. The skies were no longer blue, though the blue was still there. This, however, was but the rage of battle. Otherwise I retained my presence of

mind, and remained a part of the circle of my comrades, the compact though bruised body that was driving at the thin point of the Indian line, firing and shouting as it came.

We struck the line of smoke and savage faces and dashed through it, a feeling of triumph flushing us for a moment as we passed. But the horde poured after us, now counting out our fallen, outnumbering us seven or eight to one, hanging in a swarm on both our flanks, pressing upon us from the rear, never giving us a moment's rest, and keeping our wounds bleeding.

"To the river! To the river!" our men shouted incessantly, as if that river had suddenly become an impregnable fortress, destined to receive us and give us shelter.

The same instinct was in possession of all, and toward the river we went, the merciless fire of our enemies scorching our flanks and rear, the warriors still whooping and yelling their triumph. Yet the borderers already began to recover from their confusion. Retreat was necessary, but the fight was not done. I saw better now—the smoke was broken into pillars and columns, the rifle flashes were scattered more widely, but around us there was always the same reek of blood and sweat. Some comrade would press against me, shoulder to shoulder, straining like myself, and then he would go down, to become a victim of the tomahawk. Those who fell did not rise again.

We were a huge bank of fire and smoke moving over the ground, ourselves the front of it, the Indians the rear and sides, and always the bank was rent by many flashes and shouts and cries, and it left a trail of the dead that it spat out; yet there was some order among us, and it was not our men alone who fell. The savages, too, were beginning to pay a price.

Still the bank of fire and smoke rolled on, giving forth a volume of harsh and confused sound, and in-

creasing its speed as the blue streak of the river began to shine before it. The gleam of the water was like a magnet to many; they believed that beyond it lay safety, but, however they struggled on, the streak broadened too slowly.

Osseo was beside me, fighting as he had fought in St. Clair's defeat. Despite the confusion, I was now able to watch the attack, and when a warrior dashed out of the smoke to scalp one of our wounded who had begun to lag a little from weakness, I raised my rifle and shot the savage through the head.

"Well done!" said a voice near me, and looking through the film of smoke I beheld Underwood, whom they had called a coward. It struck me even then that I saw no fear upon his face.

The fight and the flight seemed to me to grow in ferocity as we approached the river. The great cloud increased in density and hung closer to the earth, the firing of the rifles made an unbroken crash, and the yelling of the savages was as steady and fierce as the howling of a pack of wolves. They spread farther along our flanks, and tried to overlap us and pass in front of us before we reached the ford, but we drove them back for a moment; then, with these wolves again hanging to us, we reached the river, and into the water we rushed, pursuers and pursued, white men and Indians together, still fighting, some of us now hand to hand, knives against tomahawks, the gun muzzle pressed upon the target, the silver of the river's current already flowing in red streaks.

That terrible cloud of fire and smoke which had followed us so far was not turned back by the stream, but still hovered over and inclosed us, and the core of it was now a fighting jumble of white men and red. The water was dashed into bubbles and foam by whistling bullets and striking arms. Men stumbled on the rough bottom, and falling, disappeared. Some came up again and

others did not. A floating body struck against me and passed on. The stream from bank to bank was full of red and white men, in whom only the animal was left, shooting, stabbing, and striking, and filling the air with shouts, yells, and groans. More savages lined the bank and fired at every white face they saw. The river now seemed to roar and splash around us and encourage us with an evil song to kill. The ferocity of the battle in the water excelled anything that we had seen on the land this day, and I began to believe that with all these Indians clinging to us and hacking at us we could never reach the farther shore.

Nothing oppressed me so much as that horrible river. I hated its hiss and gurgle, and my heart revolted at the sight of the bloody bubbles that floated past me. When I fell once and came up with my mouth full of water I spat it out as if it were so much poison.

As we rocked and reeled about in the stream we struggled always to burst from the grasp of the savages, to throw them off, and to escape to the shore. There was no order, no plan in our fighting, and we were without a leader, until at last I heard one voice raised above the uproar—a voice that had the tone of a commander. Wiping the smoke and spray from my eyes, I saw Underwood, up to his waist in the river, but calm.

"Comrades, men!" he shouted in a voice that everybody heard, "stand together! We must beat them back now, or none of us will be saved! Won't you help?"

His voice resounded above all the tumult of the battle, and his face was that of a man without fear. He inspired the defence anew, he brought back the courage that was natural to our little army, though partly beaten out of it by the sudden ambuscade and overwhelming attack. He dashed here and there, encouraging one, directing the efforts of another, and all of us found ourselves obeying him, as if he were our natural and chosen leader, which he now was, become such by supreme fit-

ness. Though the bullets sang their venomous little song around him, he paid no heed to them, but continued to encourage us with voice and hand, to fight with us sometimes, and always to direct the combat. I knew then that his was the wisest and bravest mind among all these men, and for a moment I was overwhelmed with shame that I had ever called him a coward or thought of him as such.

The violence of the fight in the water deepened. The Indians, despite their superiority in numbers, had not been able to pass us, and the panic that had assailed the men began to give way to a kind of fierce exultation.

Underwood was unremitting in his exertions, and presently we found ourselves formed into a line of battle—a rough line, it is true, but one that presented a defensive front to the enemy, bristling with rifles, and more dangerous to them than the wild *mêlée* of single-handed fighting in the river.

The warriors, savage as they were for our lives, shrank a moment from this little band, dripping with blood and water, wholly desperate, conscious that the time to make the last stand, if a single one was to escape, had come, and animated with the courage that the wounded beast has when he sets his back against a rock and faces his enemy. But that moment quickly passed, and then, more lustful than ever for our blood, they rushed upon us, each uttering the war-whoop. We had reloaded our rifles, and under the command of Underwood awaited the shock, half of us delivering a volley at only a few yards into their faces, the other half following it up with an equally deadly fire as they reeled back under the first blow. Then we charged them, smashing with clubs and stabbing with knives, and so great was the impetus of our slender force, borne on by the last courage which is the most desperate, that their line bent before ours and was driven back toward the shore. Numbers and their daring, of which they had a full

share, were of no avail; we were a band of wild men, and elated with the triumph of the moment we forgot death, the desire to escape, and everything else save the wish to end the lives of the yelling savages in front of us. And always Underwood led the men on, calm, watchful, unwounded.

Fighting thus, we drove them back across the river and up the hills, and so heavy was the blow we gave that the whole numerous band shrank from us, and their fire sank just as the effort and impulse which bore us on had begun to die. But the precious time to get our wounded and ourselves out of their grasp and across the river was gained. The men rushed about, still under the guidance of Underwood, and reached the farther shore as the howling pack recovered their courage and came swarming after us. But we stood upon the bank and received them as they plunged into the water with so fierce and deadly a fire that they recoiled again, and we exulted in our triumph.

CHAPTER XXIV

BACK TO THE SOUTH

THE river, which in our retreat had threatened to be our destruction, was now, repassed, our bulwark. It sometimes happens that men who have lived hitherto peaceful lives, suddenly and under the pressure of necessity develop military talent. And the pale, reserved schoolmaster, whom all called a coward, now furnished such an instance. He shouted to us to hold the ford, and he was obeyed. The spirit and courage of the borderers rose again. They were not like the raw soldiers; they might bend to the sudden blow, but they would not break, and though rash leadership and their own hot blood had led them into disaster, they sought now for revenge.

I thought it well to imitate the example of Underwood, and I too cried to the men to attack, and helped in forming our forces for the defence. Curry had been mortally wounded in the river, but managed to reach the shore, where he died presently, paying for his folly with his life. Harvey, he of the weak chin, who had been drawn into the plot by the stronger man, Curry, was wounded too, but his hurt was slight, and he was fighting with valour, all his treason gone from him in such strenuous moments like a skim of snow melting before a hot sun. I looked, too, for Mr. Carew, and I saw him lying wounded at the very edge of the stream, unable to come farther, and in his position a fair target for the Indian rifles on the other shore.

I did not in the first moment feel pity for the man. His death would be a great grief to his daughter, but it might save her from keener sorrows, and I turned my eyes from the sight of the wounded man lying there, his feet in the water. Then I felt shame and remorse because such a thought had entered my mind, and springing forward I dragged him to the cover of the rocks.

"I thank you, Lee; my debt to you grows great," he said, and there was genuine gratitude in his tone.

I had no time to answer him, as the savages, rushing forward with a fierce yell of triumph, were beginning their attempt to force the ford, though they came now to meet a foe full of courage. Our men, sheltering their bodies behind rocks and hillocks, received them with so true and deadly a fire that they fell back to the shelter of the farther bank, leaving many dead to float off with the stream. Twice and thrice they returned to the assault, but they could not force the passage, being hurled back each time with increasing loss, and then the war-cry of the borderers arose, in its turn triumphant.

All day we held that bloody ford, and at nightfall the savage army, tired of so vain and costly an effort, resumed its march to the northward, while we, taking our wounded with us, turned to the south, sad because we had rushed into an ambush, but with the saving memory that at the last we had regained our courage and driven back our foes. We had been hot with folly, but our valour had saved us.

I heard as we marched little criticism of the mistakes of others. Our own were too fresh in our minds, but the common danger now bound the men together in a brotherhood that could not be broken. Old Joe Grimes for the first time in his life was subdued, and talked to me in the most temperate manner.

"We bit off more'n we could chaw," he said. "You can scorch a cat once, but it's mighty hard to git him too close to the fire twice."

"You must help to defend the border now, Joe," I said.

"I'm not thinking of anything else," he replied.

And I believe that his words were true. Harvey, too, spoke to me a little later. His left arm was in a sling, caused by a flesh wound, but his downcast look was not due to his hurt.

"Mr. Lee," he said, "I have been indulging in a dream as foolish as it was wicked, and it took a man whom I once despised, Underwood the schoolmaster, to awaken me from it."

"But you waken in time," I said.

"Will you say nothing of what you saw and heard in Danville back there, that night?" he asked.

"You do not need my promise," I answered; "the occasion will never arise."

His face grew clearer, and presently I saw him talking in the most cheerful manner to others. In truth, he was but a boy, and Curry had drawn him into the mischief. Mr. Carew, on his part, was silent and moody, a frame of mind for which his wound gave him good excuse, and I kept away from him. Underwood by unanimous consent remained in command, though he was kind enough often to ask the advice of Osseo, myself, and others, and he conducted us safely across the Ohio into Kentucky, where the little army divided, all returning to their homes or duties elsewhere. Osseo again was to wait for me at the Ohio, and I continued the journey with Underwood and Mr. Carew to Danville. It was my first impulse to stop at the Ohio, but I wished to see Mr. Carew safe again with his wife and daughter, and I did not deny to myself that the sight of Rose Carew once more would be pleasant to my eyes. Not in all the years since its beginning had my disgrace borne so heavily upon me as it did now. Were I only free to seek her, I said over and over again to myself, I might pick up the challenging glove of any one, even that of Jasper

himself, with all his worldly wealth and smooth ways. I renewed the events of our life together, the long flight through the forest, the idyllic days, and the revelation. I could remember each incident, and the order in which it came, and her look and smile when she spoke.

Mr. Carew remained silent and gloomy. His wound, though still painful, did not prevent him from travelling on horseback, and I was glad now that he had been struck in the battle, since to any who might hereafter taunt him with projected treason he could point to the honourable scars received in his country's cause. But Underwood was my friend, and we talked freely. There was a certain change in him. The man had found himself. He was now conscious of his own powers, and yet scarce knowing whence the knowledge came. I saw in him a force which had not appeared until that night in Danville, when it was disclosed by the presence of supreme emotion. I was drawn to him, too, by the faith that he showed in me.

"You must remain with us now, Lee," he repeated. "'Tis not a matter to be dismissed lightly, and I beg you to think long upon it before you refuse. You were one of those who did not fall into a panic back there at the ford. The debt that Kentucky owes you has grown. Here you have the respect and love of everybody. Stay with us and become one of our great men. We need your like."

He did not know then that he himself was to win such a place—member of Congress and then Governor of his State, a national figure of importance—but I dimly foresaw it even at that moment. I confess that he tempted me strongly. I could go back to the old community and show the honours given to me by the new, but stronger than that was the vision of a woman's oval face, with fair hair rising above pure eyes.

"Don't ask me, Underwood," I replied; "I feel that I ought not to stay."

He said no more, but often I caught his eyes dwelling upon me with a wistful look, and I was troubled much, for the flesh was weak.

I felt that our defeat—defeat it was despite the final repulse of the savages—was not in one respect a bad thing for the Western people, as they could now look with more leniency upon the mistakes of their Eastern brethren, and the community of disaster would bind them together. The news of the fight at the ford was received with calm, showing another phase of their character. It was their own who had made the mistake and suffered, and they would not complain; rather, it would encourage them to new efforts in defence of the border, and they would make expiation; they would hold the Western marches until the new relief expedition which the Government was now said to be preparing could come. The people strengthened themselves again for the great task that lay before them, and in the face of defeat that must be repaired the last phase of Spanish or French conspiracy disappeared like a dead leaf before a wind.

Our advance southward was slow, owing to Mr. Carew's wound, and suddenly spring, which often in that latitude makes unkept promises, began to breathe upon us with south winds. Tender blades of grass sprang up amid the dead stems of last year, and a faint tint of green appeared on the foliage. I looked at the beautiful land rolling so gently over hill and valley, the brooks of clear water, and the noble forests of oak and hickory and beech; and Underwood, following my eye, swept his hand in a wide curve.

"This is too fine a country for our race to lose," he said, "and I know, too, of none better for the making of a man's career."

His eyes met mine directly now, and his look was most meaning, but I shook my head. He sighed slightly, and was silent.

Joe Grimes and others had gone on before, and we found our fame ready for us. The skill, courage, and quickness of Underwood were praised by all, and he had ample repayment for the measure of contempt which once was given to him. I too, it is said, had borne a part second only to his, and my denials seemed only to increase the emphasis of the statements. Mr. Carew was applauded as a hero who had received a desperate wound in a successful endeavour to cover the retreat of his comrades, and soon he brightened visibly, for he loved praise. His confidence returned, and he speedily became his old complacent self, ready of speech and courteous of manner. Jasper met us at Lexington, and his joy at the sight of Mr. Carew, alive and wrapped in glory, was quite wonderful to see. He wished that he could boast of such honourable scars; it had been a painful thing for him to stay behind, but necessity was the step-mother of choice, and he was the sufferer, yet the knowledge of Mr. Carew's achievements almost repaid him. It was all hollow to me, but Mr. Carew's delight was manifest, and soon the attention of Underwood and myself was not required by him, as he found ample pleasure in the society and flattery of Jasper.

I went with them to Danville, where I saw Mr. Carew restored to his daughter and wife, as Rose Carew had been restored to her father and mother. She said but little to me then, but asked me not to go to the Ohio before seeing her again, and I promised.

CHAPTER XXV

FOR HONOUR'S SAKE

SPRING was in the air when Rose Carew and I walked together on the border of the little town that was to be the capital of the new State. There had been a brief period of peace among us, a rest before beginning anew the struggle in the Northwest. Not a breath of the Spanish conspiracy came to our ears. It seemed to be dead.

Mr. Carew was recovering from his wound, and his most faithful attendant next to his daughter was Jasper, who knew now all his moods, and, without fail, anticipated them.

I had been thinking of Osseo, and how he was waiting at the Ohio, but after my promise I could not go until Rose Carew sent for me, and now I had come. She seemed to me somewhat changed in these later days. I missed the humour and varying moods that marked her in our first flight through the wilderness. She was graver and paler, and yet she had passed through much to make her so.

I had heard for some days the voice of the wilderness calling in tones that would not be denied, but now as I walked with Rose Carew in this new and beautiful land just given to the uses of man, I heard another voice calling too. I was not by nature the wilderness hunter; the forest had its glory, but so had the homes of men. I was not one to scorn honours, and I loved to gaze upon the beautiful face of a woman.

The sunshine was like gold in the clear air, and the houses glittered under its rays. Slender columns of smoke rose and seemed afar like silver spires. All around us stretched the noble country. I felt the influence of such a scene, and I saw that she too was touched by it. Her lips were parted a little, and the red in her cheeks deepened.

"Yes, it is beautiful," she said, divining my thoughts.

"Almost too beautiful for one to leave," I answered.

"One need not leave it," she said.

We were silent for a while, and then she continued, somewhat as if speaking to herself:

"Pride is a fine thing to have, and often it may serve to keep one's honour clean, and again it may make its possessor stubborn, and blind his eyes to the right. I knew a man once to whom a great wrong had been done, and his heart was filled with bitterness toward those who had done him the wrong. He left his home and came to this new land. Soon he became known on the whole border for his valour in defence of the defenceless, and all loved him. When there was any great service of danger and daring to be done they sent for him, and he never refused. A girl was taken from her people and carried into the far Northwest by the savages, and this man followed to rescue her. When naught else could avail, and the Indian chief made the suggestion to him, he gave himself for her. He was rescued, but when he made that sacrifice he did not know that he would be."

"It is a fable," I said. "The man is a border boaster. He merely claimed to have made such a sacrifice in order that he might rise in the favour of the rescued girl."

"It is not a fable," she said. "He made no boast of it, but tried to keep it a secret. She learned of it from another. She did not at first know of the great injustice that had been done to this man, and when she heard the story of the charge against him, and

which he did not deny to her, she felt aversion toward him. She could not help it, because she believed then that the charge was true."

She faced me now, her eyes gazing into mine, and I felt that she was like one who had come to a confession and was resolved to make it. I would have stopped her, but I could not.

"But she continued to watch him," she resumed, "and when she saw his deeds and the sacrifices he made for others she felt that whatever he may have done, it was in a moment of rash and heedless youth, and his was now a great nature, all the nobler because of what he had suffered."

"It was her generous heart that made her think so," I said. "Men often wear false faces, and because of his fancied service she saw him not as he was, but as she wished him to be."

"Not so," she said. "She saw him better than he saw himself. She would have him take all the rewards which other men covet, and which might be his if he would seek them. Perhaps no wish would be denied him. But his pride stands in the way, and there he wrongs himself and others."

I had no answer then to make her. The note of the wilderness was silent at that moment, and I heard only the voice of my own kind calling to me. It was, in truth, a most beautiful land in which to live and be happy. I looked at the oak groves and the rolling hills in the tender green of young spring, and then at the tall girl with the luminous eyes, and I thought that never before had the homes of white men seemed so fair.

"You do not know how many friends you have here," she said presently, "and I now owe you two great debts of gratitude—one for myself and one for my father. Oh, I have heard how you rescued him at the ford, and I have heard how you and Mr. Underwood saved our little army from destruction and turned the day."

"My friends are overkind," I said. "It was Underwood who did it all. My part was no more than that of any other."

"Those who were with you do not say so. Kentucky is filled with your praises. None sings them louder than Mr. Underwood, who is sure to receive great honour from the State. Why should you refuse the same reward?"

Then she painted a picture which was in truth most beautiful, though I knew it, too, to be most dangerous. It was the same story that Underwood had told me, and the colours were the same, but there was something else in her voice of which he could know nothing, and it was that which I dreaded most. I asked myself how any woman could ever hold in her heart the man who does not keep his honour clean. The thought decided me, and I was about to tell her that I should depart the next day for Osseo at the Ohio, but she, seeming to divine the nature of what I would say, exclaimed:

"No, do not give me your answer now; I shall have more to say presently."

Then she changed, and the change was so sudden that it took my breath, while I admired. She became again the piquant, elusive girl whom I had known in the forest, with all her variable moods and merry humour, speaking of one topic, and then flitting to another like a butterfly on the wing. I felt my blood leap under the influence of her gaiety, but I soon noticed that she talked most of the East, of old places and people whom I knew, touching here and there upon the things that were vital to me and which I loved most, arousing in me such a longing to see it all again, and to see it when she saw it, that I was forced to put myself in bands of iron.

Then she stopped suddenly.

"Now I must go back to my father," she said, "and I wish to see you again to-morrow, Mr. Lee, if you will come. But first I have another promise to exact of you. Go to the inn to-night. Some one who wishes very much

to see you will be there. No, don't ask me who it is, but go."

Of course I gave such an easy promise; and that night, shortly after sunset, I sat in a little room at the inn with a thick-set, large-faced, stern-lipped man, of whom I had heard often, but whom I now met for the first time. It was Isaac Shelby, one of the heroes of King's Mountain, a valiant patriot and defender of the border, who by almost unanimous consent was now about to become the first Governor of Kentucky.

"We are well met, Mr. Lee," he said. "I have long heard of you, and I have heard good only. But now to business, understanding, of course, that what we say is in the confidence always existing between gentlemen."

I bowed. In truth, he was wasting but little time upon preliminaries, though his welcome to me was warm, and all the more grateful coming from such a man. He fixed his eyes upon me, seeming to mark every expression of mine as he spoke.

"You are a man of note in this region, Mr. Lee," he said. "You have a long claim upon its gratitude, and your fame is extending. Your rescue of Miss Carew was a most gallant affair, and your services in that last fight across the Ohio were great. Don't look embarrassed, man; I but speak the truth. And there is something else to your credit. I know of your visit to the school-house that night with Underwood, when you two faced the Spanish conspirators, and I know every one of them, too."

I felt a sudden fear for Mr. Carew, and the fear was because of his daughter. He was a stern man who sat before me, and soon great power would be in his hands.

"I knew that such an affair was breeding here," he continued, "and you need not think that it could ever have succeeded; doubtless you do not; I had some part in defeating the schemes of that wretch Wilkinson and his associates, and I could crush this, were it not

dead already, with a single pressure of my thumb, for, as you know, I am about to become the first Governor of this State, which I mention merely as fact, and not through vain boasting."

"But these men are all repentant," I said.

"Those who have a chance to be so with one or two exceptions," he said. "The two lawyers are too much frightened ever to raise their heads in such an affair again, and Curry, who under certain circumstances might have been the most dangerous of them all, has died for his country's sake. Now there is Mr. Carew."

He did not take his eyes off me, and unless I deceived myself I saw a faint twinkle in them.

"But Mr. Carew is safe," he continued, "only he will have to be careful how he walks, despite the great credit he has received for that wound in the recent battle. When Kentucky calls upon him for service he will have to respond."

He spoke with emphasis, and his lips shut tightly together. I saw that Mr. Carew was in truth in a trap, and I could appreciate the grim humour of it all the more because it put him in a safe place.

"His daughter need not fear for her father," he said, and again I saw that faint twinkle in his eye—a twinkle that set me to guessing.

"And there, too, is your cousin Jasper," he continued. "I wish I could find some proof against him, but he has been too cunning. We should only weaken ourselves by proceeding against him. He is a bad fellow, Mr. Lee, for all his cousinship."

I was silent.

"And now for yourself," he continued. "You were one of those who denounced this affair. There you did us a service again, and we would reward you. I am not unaware of your past. Your pardon for mentioning it, but it was a necessity. Stay with us and you shall have one of the greatest offices in the gift of

the Governor. You are a swordsman and a rifle shot, and if any one speak ill of you, warn him that he does so at his peril. Here in this land you are within a hedge of friends."

I was moved to the depths and I felt myself trembling. I would have remained then, when this offer so fair was made to me, but I was afraid of a woman's face. With her constantly before me I could not be true to myself, and I said again under my breath that the duty rested now more heavily upon me than upon most men to keep my honour clean.

"Then you will not stay?" he said, when I had given my answer.

"No," I replied.

"Not even if others should ask you?"

"Others have asked me, and I have given them the same answer. I do not think that I should stay."

"It seems a pity," he said. "We shall have troublous times here, and God knows that this community needs strong men."

"I shall have other work to do yonder on the border."

"Ay, that you shall, and I know that you will do it well. My good wishes attend you, Mr. Lee."

He gave my hand a strong clasp, and I left him, to find Osseo waiting for me at my lodgings. The chief had grown impatient, and he came now from the Ohio to find me. He asked me no question, but merely waited there in silent inquiry.

"We shall go to-morrow, Osseo," I said.

The next day in hunter's garb and with my rifle on my shoulder I bade Miss Carew good-bye. She looked at me steadily, and her eyes were full of reproach.

"What does this departure mean, Mr. Lee?" she asked.

"I return to the place in which I belong—the forest," I replied.

"And your promise to me back there across the Ohio that you would come to Philadelphia?" she asked.

"There are some promises which it is more honest to break than to keep," I replied. "What right have I to go to the East? What reply could I make to those who should ask me why I came?"

"But I asked you to come," she said. "Do not go back to the wilderness. Stay and live the larger life for which you are fit. Prove to all your enemies what you can be."

I shook my head.

"It is too late," I said.

"It is not too late!" she exclaimed, and her tone thrilled me in every fibre. "Won't you come? What does something that happened long ago matter now? Of what importance is it now whether you were innocent or guilty then?"

"Does it matter to you?"

"No."

Her eyes told me that she spoke the truth, though the crimson in her cheeks was deeper. She did not know now how much I was compelled to cast aside. The forest was calling to me in a yet louder tone of duty.

"Good-bye," I said.

"Will you go back to the wilderness?"

"Yes, I have no choice."

She turned and ran into the house, leaving me standing there like one dazed, and I felt to the centre of my heart that I should never see her again.

A friendly hand was put upon my shoulder, and the voice of Osseo, as low and sweet as that of a woman, said in my ear:

"The forest is calling to us, my brother."

"Ay, Osseo, I hear it; let us go."

We started at once, and soon were deep in the great Northwestern wilderness.

CHAPTER XXVI

TWO YEARS LATER

"You will find him in the fort on the hill yonder," said the man. "He has been there for the last hour talking with his officers."

Time had passed, and I was now in the village called Cincinnati, a little place in its fifth or sixth year, built of log huts and shanties according to the border fashion of making its beginnings. But it was a picturesque village set between high hills, and with the wide and deep Ohio flowing at its feet.

Before me was Fort Washington, its square logs rising to a height of two stories and glistening with whitewash, the mouths of cannon appearing at its bastions, while to the eastward stretched a well-filled garden and the houses of the officers, all forming an odd combination of war and peace.

I walked up the hill, full of my resolve, and came to the fort, where I was stopped by a sentinel, rifle in hand. I gave him my name and business, and when he reported them to those inside I was conducted to a large apartment, but ill lighted by a single window. A half-dozen officers were sitting about, and evidently they had been debating subjects of importance, as maps and papers lay upon a table. He whom I sought was on the far side of the table, a short, thick, rosy-faced man, dressed in a splendid Continental uniform, each garment arranged with such care that its wearer could have been called dandyish, and might have been depre-

ciated by strangers had not the dignity of his manner and penetrating gaze forbidden it. A three-cornered hat with a great rosette upon the side lay at his elbow.

I distinctly saw a sneer upon the faces of several of the officers as I entered and was announced, and the most pronounced of all was that which disfigured the countenance of my cousin Jasper. But I treated such insolence with the coldness and scorn it deserved, and kept my eyes fixed upon him to whom I came. He rose to his feet at the mention of my name, gazed fixedly at me a moment or two, with an expression of surprise changing rapidly—yes, I could not mistake it—to one of pleasure. Then he came forward with a quick, nervous step, and holding out both his hands, cried:

"It is the same John Lee who was by my side that night on the rocks at Stony Point!"

I took the two hands that he offered me, and he must have felt mine tremble as they clasped his own. He knew all the old story, and yet he never hesitated.

"Good old Jack Lee! Brave Jack Lee! Where have you been all these years?" he cried. "They told me in the East that you were dead, that you had been killed somewhere in the woods by the Indians. Out upon such a lie; 'twas past believing! 'twas impossible! What, the warm-blooded youth whom I used to know, the lad who never feared death, slain, obscurely, by breech-clouted savages! 'Twas a lie I believed then, and I know it now! And you have come here now, Jack Lee, to help me in this pass!"

I was looking into the honest and steadfast eyes of Mad Anthony Wayne—what a pity many others were not affected with his particular kind of madness!—and I knew that I stood, as I had hoped, in the presence of a man my friend once, my friend yet—and always. He gave me ample and immediate proof.

"Gentlemen," he said to the others, and there was a touch of warning in his tone, "John Lee, of the Con-

tinental army, one of its most gallant and meritorious officers; one who never flinched in a desperate cause—I who was his comrade ought to know—and who, as some of you perhaps remember, was most unjustly accused and condemned of an infamous crime, but whose innocence all the world shall yet know—gentlemen, Mr. Lee!"

Then he presented them to me one by one, some bowing slightly and coldly, others with more warmth; and last of all was Major Carew—he was a major now—smiling and self-collected as of old.

"We are no strangers," he said as he took my hand. "I owe him much, and, moreover, we are comrades of the field."

I saw that he had no fear of me, expecting me to spare him if he would spare me. He was safe from words of mine, but my chief reason was not the one that he had in mind.

"None, general, can be more glad than I to meet Mr. Lee. This is the man who saved my daughter from the worst fate that may befall a woman," he continued.

"'Twas like honest Jack, brave Jack," said General Wayne. "He ever had a weakness for the fair sex, and while willing enough to lay down his life for his country, he was more than willing to lay it down for woman, beautiful woman."

I was sorry that the general's warmth of commendation carried him quite so far, but 'twould have been a shame to complain. Major Carew merely smiled.

"General Wayne gives you a character concerning the ladies which youth does not despise, and which in my own time I was anxious to have," he said.

I was not thinking then of his words, but of Rose Carew. Where was she? In Kentucky or in the East? Married, doubtless! What else could I expect? Still I asked no question about her. General Wayne poured

wine; he seemed to be in an excellent humour; we had been loyal friends once, though he was the superior in age and rank, and, thank God, were yet, as I could see; and, lifting his glass of wine, he said again, with that note of warning in his voice:

"Gentlemen, drink with me to the health of honest Jack Lee; to the lost who is found; to John Lee, late captain of the Continental army, and now captain in Wayne's army of the West."

All drank more or less, and I stared at him in amazement. He put his hand upon my arm as in the old days, and said, in the gentle and winning way that he knew so well how to assume:

"Jack, dear old Jack, will you not oblige me in this little matter? I have power here to give you the commission, and you know how badly I need men like you. This is to be a most arduous campaign. We are to fight a hidden foe, and you, they tell me, know more about the wilderness and its ways than any other man living. Underwood, your new member of Congress, vouches for it too. Now, good old Jack, don't say me nay."

It was he who was doing the pleading; it was I who was to grant the favour—it was Mad Anthony's way. There was water somewhere at the back of my eyes, but I let it come no further, holding it meet that I should bear myself as a man without emotion. I saw at that moment the deepening sneer on Jasper's face, but it did not have power to touch me; I knew far worse things of the smooth and silky villain than he thought of me, and I took now a firm resolution, the precise opposite of another I had taken that time when a woman's voice and eyes spoke to me. The friendly touch of an old comrade's hand and the welcoming sound of his voice aroused a hope that I might reconquer that former world which I had believed dead for me. The others began to say their adieux, Major Carew giving me his hand again ere he went, and then I was alone with

Mad Anthony. He pushed me into a seat and bent upon me a look of grave reproach.

"Jack, it was wrong of thee," he said, theeing and thouing me after the fashion that he sometimes adopted with me in the earlier time, learned perhaps from his Pennsylvania Quaker brethren. "Thou shouldst have outfaced 'em all. It was a lie, and your friends knew it. There was Buxton, of the Jersey Horse, who fought a duel in behalf of thee, running his man neatly through the shoulder. I should have fought one myself had my rank permitted it. I repeat, Jack, it was wrong of thee —wrong to thyself and to thy friends."

"Nay, general," I said. "What else was left to me? The evidence was against me, and the verdict of the court. I was lucky in not being hanged—or perhaps unlucky. I say again there was naught else for me to do but to hide myself and my honour."

"Ever the same stubborn fool!" he said with vehemence. "But we knew that you were innocent, Jack, and by all the gods that are in the mythology—Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and every other kind—it shall yet be proved!"

I shook my head.

"Nay, general," I said; "I expect to keep the stain, faded a little, perhaps, by time."

"And I maintain that you shall not!" he said, smiting the table with his fist. "I would have you to know, sir, that I am commander here, and when I say a thing shall be done it will be done."

I was about to speak, but he turned upon me with a sudden change of tone.

"Nay, Jack, don't tell me anything," he said. "I heard but vaguely about the trial, but I sha'n't believe you guilty, even if you swear that you were. As your friend, not as your commander, I now entreat you not to say another word upon that subject, but to come to the reception to my officers and myself to-morrow night

at the residence of Mr. Converse, and to come, too, in your uniform as captain. Montrose, my aide, will furnish you with the uniform."

Not pausing for an answer, he knocked upon the door of an adjoining room, and Montrose, an honest-faced man of six- or eight-and-twenty, came forth. General Wayne introduced me as one of his new captains, and whether Lieutenant Montrose knew my history or not, he gave me a hand grasp that was warm and sincere.

"Now, Captain Lee, I leave you for the present in the care of Lieutenant Montrose," said General Wayne. "Don't forget that I expect you to-morrow night at the house of Mr. Converse."

I could do nothing but continue with Montrose, while General Wayne closed the door upon us. In my soul I was deeply thankful to Mad Anthony, but knowing no way to express my thanks to him, I determined to attempt none. Had he not taken such advantage of me I should have refused to go to the house of this man Converse, but I suddenly asked myself, "Why should I not go?" The kindness of General Wayne seemed to open new ways for me; I would go! The glimpse of friendly faces had set the old world to calling in a louder voice than ever, and I was in a mood to heed its note.

An errand took me from the town into the forest an hour or two later, and I did not return until the next day, but I was in time for the reception to be given to the officers of the army by Mr. Converse, hastening at once to my new friend, Lieutenant Montrose, who was ready with the uniform, a spare one of his own that sat upon me well. It had been years since I arranged a toilet with such care, but I felt now with great force the need of making a good, even fastidious, appearance; and when I contemplated the result in a small hand-glass I felt a reasonable degree of satisfaction. It is true that I was almost as brown as an Indian, but, after

all, tan is not unbecoming, and while I had been reckoning myself old I realized with sudden force and delight that I was young. A small but tempting voice whispered in my ear, "You are young enough yet, John Lee, to win back honour and happiness," and I felt come over me a sudden glow like the memory of a lost joy that may be brought back again. All young soldiers are dandies, and I had been such in my time, but I saw that my forest life had not injured me; instead, it had given somewhat more flexibility, as the youthful military officer is likely to be a stiff figure.

When the inspection was finished I clapped upon my head a gorgeous cocked hat, and buckled by my side a fine sword that General Wayne himself sent me, and thus accoutred I felt ready for the social fray, howsoever fierce it might be, at the house of Mr. Converse, although I fancied that its nature could not be very grave in this little backwoods town. Still, it was a great step for me, inasmuch as I had not taken part in any such affair, not even of the humblest kind, for years, although once extremely fond of them, and I felt my heart beating like that of a youth about to make his first venture upon the floor of a drawing-room.

"Let us go together," said Montrose, linking his arm in mine in most friendly fashion. I was soon sure that General Wayne had been talking to him about me, and his naturally good heart accounted for the rest of his geniality.

He hung a lantern upon his other arm, as Cincinnati was too early in its infancy and too far in the wilderness to be provided with any lighting at night save that of the moon, which is of a most inconstant nature. 'Twas thus that we approached the home of Mr. Converse, a place of some pretensions and considerable size, built of logs and oak boards, and showing many corners and angles. However rude a house so constructed may seem to some, it is truth that such

primitive abodes in the West often shelter people of breeding and quality. Many families of the finest education and manners are among those who went over the Alleghanies, risking the perils of the wilderness and Indian wars, to find homes on the lands of the West, which are richer than those of the East. Hence I knew that, despite appearances, I should be in no mean company. In truth, as we approached we saw several carriages in front of the house, which stood on the crest of one of the lower hills, while boys bearing torches like the link boys in the East were running about, and lights were glittering in every window. We beheld already, even before entrance, a scene of pleasing bustle and gaiety, and again I felt my youth, for, as I have said before, I liked these things, and still like them. The background of wooded hills, yellow, winding river, and wilderness added the picturesque touch that was needed, and I began to feel most glad that I had come. Montrose saw my face, and he said:

"You are right, Lee. As an officer of General Wayne 'tis your duty to be present, and 'tis well when duty and pleasure go together."

CHAPTER XXVII

OLD FACES IN NEW GUISE

We reached the house, entered, and our names being announced, we found in truth a brilliant company present, glittering with many of the gayest fashions of the East, golden epaulets, and laces and shawls of India, and gold and silver shoe-buckles, and other such adornments, to which my eyes had been a stranger for years. Moreover, the wooden walls of the house contained much mahogany furniture dragged painfully over the mountains from New York or Pennsylvania.

I noted my reception with curiosity and a prepared stoicism. It was of a mixed nature, some showing warmth and others holding aloof, but none dared to offer insult, since General Wayne, who was the first to greet me, had so evidently constituted himself my champion, while Major Carew came forward to salute me with even greater warmth. Jasper himself did not risk more than a sneer. He had regained his position in the army through powerful influences, and now, ranking as a major, had come West again with Wayne. I wondered why he ventured a second time upon such dangerous ground; but here he was, in a most resplendent uniform, and beyond a doubt confident of his position and himself. My gaze lingered on him for a moment only, passing on to an honest, square, and ruddy face—in truth, the face of Winchester, whom I had thought in England. We gave each other that silent hand clasp which speaks so much, and then he said:

"I concluded to make one more trip in the fur trade, and I have brought Mrs. Winchester with me. She is in the next room, and you shall see her presently."

There was a small matter of wine to be discussed by the gentlemen, and then Winchester, hooking his arm in mine, said he would take me into the adjoining apartment and present me to the ladies.

So many lights glittered in the drawing-room that at first they quite dazzled me, having been unaccustomed so long to anything of the kind. But I heard the words of Winchester as he presented me to his wife, and then, my eyes clearing, I saw her. She was a young Englishwoman of the familiar type, quite as ruddy as Winchester himself, very blonde and handsome, and watching with delighted curiosity the incidents so strange to her that she beheld in the American backwoods.

"Mr. Winchester has told me ten thousand things of you," she said in the deep, low voice which is among the finest possessions of Englishwomen. "I wonder if they are true?"

"I should like first to know what they are before I vouch for them," I replied.

She laughed, and said:

"I will tell you of them another time, but now I wish to present you to some one else."

I looked up and it was Rose Carew—but not the Rose Carew that I had known in the forest. Then she was a simple Western maid fleeing with me through the wilderness and seeking to save life and honour; now she was the woman of quality in splendid raiment, and bearing herself as one to whom tribute was due. I seemed to be further from her than I had felt on that day when I believed I could win her and had put the chance aside. I was for a few moments without the power of speech, and there was a mist before my eyes.

I had thought that I should never see her again, and now I saw her, but she stood there, a stranger.

"Am I forgotten, Mr. Lee," she said calmly, "and will you not take the hand that I offer you?"

I recovered my presence of mind and took her hand. Then my old facility of speech came back—'twas said when I was a youth that I knew what sounded sweet in a lady's ear—and I made her the handsomest compliments that my tongue could fashion.

"You have become a soldier now, Mr. Lee," she said, "and all soldiers are alike; it is a large part of their business to make pretty speeches to ladies."

I disclaimed any intent of flattery, and she continued in this vein for some time, reminding me more and more of the world that I had left behind in the East. She scarce alluded to those tense days when we fled together from the savages, and I began to feel that she had changed in more particulars than one; she had grown more splendid and beautiful, but she was thinking little now of us in the West. It was a painful impression, although I knew that I had no right to feel pain. A sudden chill came over me; the sense of comradeship which had existed between us seemed to be gone forever; certainly I had no right to claim its restoration. I was sorry for a moment or two that I had entered the Converse house, and then the feeling of stubbornness which is often such a bulwark came to my relief. I had resolved to hold my head erect before all men; I would do so before all women too.

I could not monopolize her attention, and soon I yielded my place to another, she letting me go without show of either joy or reluctance, but saying that we should be sure to see each other again before the evening reached its end. I came to the conclusion—and it gave me a pang—that she would rather forget our acquaintance, and it was wholly in reason that she could wish to forget that last interview.

If Miss Carew's welcome was cool, not so was that of others. I had friends, warm friends, present, who knew that I needed championship, and they came quickly to my relief. General Wayne gave me his especial help, and spoke more than once of my services to the border in such terms that modesty compelled me to enter a disclaimer. Winchester and his wife, too, repeated my praises, and there also was young Harvey, now serving in Wayne's army. I saw that Mrs. Winchester was already a prime favourite in this little frontier settlement, and her influence was great; she was likely to prove the most efficient of all my champions. Major Carew, also, had not abated one whit from his warm and friendly manner—in truth, as in our earlier acquaintance, I wished that he would be a trifle less effusive—and with the aid of such allies I felt that I should have sufficient courage and resources to maintain my position. Then, despite Rose Carew, I began to feel a warm glow about the heart. There was much present to appeal to me. I was with people who came from the world to which I had belonged, and all the old chords in my nature were touched; mingled with this and stronger than before was the returned knowledge that I was yet a young man, and the reconquest of the world that I wished seemed not impossible. Perhaps my faculties for such lighter affairs as these were strengthened and refreshed by their long disuse, but I felt that I was bearing myself well and that I did not suffer in the passages of words. Once Winchester whispered in my ear, "Keep on as you have begun, Lee."

But to whomsoever I was talking or whatsoever I was doing I kept a side look on Rose Carew. The fancy that she was not the same girl whom I had known in the forest returned to me with increased force: then she was in every respect simple and unpretending; now she practised all the arts of the finished coquette; she seemed to crave attention—of a certainty she had it; appar-

ently she wished all the men at her feet, and they were there; and despite myself she drew me toward her with as much strength as the simple forest maid had ever done—yes, more.

Jasper approached her presently. I thought that she would turn from him with repulsion, knowing as she must know what he was; but her brightest smile had been saved for him, and soon I heard their voices laughing together at some quip or jest of his. I turned my eyes away with a feeling of anger and a great sinking of the heart. If such deeds as his were to achieve the greater reward, one might well lose faith, not only in the justice of man but in that of the Supreme Power. Yet it was unreasonable of me to find fault with her for believing Jasper's tale about his presence among the savages, since it was a most plausible one, and evidently had deceived the American officers.

I found that my reputation as an expert in forest lore and combat had reached nearly all the people present, and soon I was called upon to tell about the savages whom Wayne was going to fight for the sake of protecting the border and cleansing away the disgrace of St. Clair's defeat. I was surrounded by a group and I was compelled to describe with some detail the ways of the Indian, and the dangers that white troops going against him were bound to incur.

"What cruel beings they are!" said a lady.

"It is true," I said, "but they are savages, and such are the ways of savages. There are some men among them far more guilty than the Indians."

"Who are they?"

"The renegades, white men who have turned Indian," I replied—I had introduced this subject purposely, because Jasper was near, and could hear—"white men who have joined the vices of their own race to those of the red man, and who scorn the virtues of either. The blackest souls in the world are among

them—Girty, Blackstaffe, and others not so well known."

I let my eyes fall upon Jasper, but he met my gaze firmly. In truth, I must say that the man was a perfect actor. He laughed lightly, and then said:

"I can vouch for the accuracy of Captain Lee's statements. When I was captured by the Miamis just after St. Clair's defeat I was compelled to pretend that I would join them in order to save myself from being burned at the stake, and then I saw Girty and Blackstaffe—and horrible scoundrels they were—ugh! the memory of it is like poison to me yet!"

He gave a shudder of repulsion, and the ladies murmured their sympathy. 'Twas most effective, and yet I was not sorry to have reminded him of the episode, as I wished him to bear in mind that while he was armed against me I also was armed against him. In a few minutes he was playing Miss Carew's most devoted cavalier, and search as I would for signs of dislike on her part, I could find none; to all his jests and small talk she listened with close attention, and when he made a point her smile and laugh were forthcoming as a matter of course, and at the sight my heart again became most heavy. She was forbidden to me, but I could bear it better to know that she was in the arms of any other man than Jasper. When I saved her from Hoyoquim I did not save her from a worse fate. My opportunity to talk with her came again soon, and it was but to receive a rebuke.

"Why did you speak with such point of renegades in the presence of your cousin?" she asked.

"You know before the telling, Miss Carew," I said, resolved not to be evasive. "Surely you can not have forgotten how he walked in the Indian village with Girty and Blackstaffe."

"No, I have not forgot," she replied; "but how can I know that he was in truth and reality a rene-

gade? You only say so, and you seem not to like him."

It was bitter to me to hear her words, because I saw now that Jasper had made her believe me to be the villain and himself the martyr, and I do not know what reply I should have made, but there was a murmur and buzz just then near the door, and my chosen comrade and loyal friend Osseo entered, looking the chief and magnificent warrior that he was.

Osseo, though he played the Sphinx on most occasions, was quite subject to human emotions, and he always had a keen eye for the approval of the ladies which I hold to be not unbecoming in him. Therefore he had some very splendid toilcts, and I had never seen him looking finer than he was that night. There was not in the whole assembly a man of more dignity and presence—not Mr. Converse, not Major Carew, nor General Wayne himself.

The colour affected by Osseo that evening was dark blue. Such was the tint of his head-dress and of the little eagle's feather symbolizing the chief rising from the centre of it. The short blanket which hung in folds from his shoulders was of blue, and of the richest texture. His deerskin leggings and moccasins were of light blue adorned with a multitude of little beads and porcupine quills, most of which were dyed a darker shade of the same colour. Around his waist and inclosing his tunic was a broad belt of similar hue, beautifully worked and containing his tomahawk and hunting knife, both with polished horn handles. When I add to this that Osseo was six feet three inches high, with massive shoulders, and a waist as slender as a woman's, you can easily conceive what a figure he made.

There were little cries, half of terror and half of admiration, from the ladies when the splendid Indian entered, and some of the men who knew him went forward to greet him. But Miss Carew was the first to

meet the warrior, and I noticed how much warmer his reception was than mine. In truth, she took his hand in both of hers, and told of her pleasure to see him again.

"You gave me my life, Osseo," she said, "and I can never reward you."

Then she proceeded to make a great commotion over the chief, although 'tis not for me to say that he did not deserve it, in which pleasant work she was assisted by most of the other ladies. They hovered around him like a covey of partridges, and the ingenuous red man, with a taste for which I give him credit, made no effort to disguise his pleasure—these Indian chiefs, like white men, know well when they are being made heroes of, and, like white men, they enjoy it. I begrudged Osseo his place for a moment or two, and then I was ashamed of myself for such unworthy thoughts. Truly I should wish my best friend success equal to his desert.

Yet Osseo a little later was the cause of some embarrassment, which fortunately was witnessed by but two or three; 'twas when Miss Carew had joined Winchester and his wife and I was approaching, drawn, I suppose, like the moth to the flame. Then Osseo gave Miss Carew and me a benignant smile, and asked of me, with a significant look at the lady:

"When does Lee take the White Rose to his wigwam?"

Winchester and his wife looked embarrassed, while Miss Carew turned scarlet from neck to brow. I thought it best to take his question as a jest and I replied:

"The White Rose, Osseo, has never yet signified her willingness to go to my wigwam."

"Why is Lee so foolish as to ask her?" said Osseo with great earnestness. "Let him take her first, and then if he choose ask her when she can make no answer

but yes. Lee is a great warrior, and she will soon be happy in his wigwam."

I was quite confounded. The savages are usually very plain and blunt in the matter of speech, which has its advantages at times and at other times is most awkward; but I replied:

"'Tis not our way, Osseo, and the customs which the white man has practised so long he can not change."

He shrugged his shoulders as if still believing that the red way was the best, and Miss Carew soon gave me her shoulder, letting me see most plainly that the incident was not to my service. Presently she was with Jasper again, and I withdrew into a little room set aside for the men. There chance placed me next to Major Carew, and it was my impression that his large ambition and worldly views were unchanged. His wife, she whose piteous face had sent me upon the arduous quest, was dead a year and a half, and having come back to Kentucky again to look after his lands, he had found it incumbent upon him as one of its beneficiaries to join in Wayne's expedition for the relief of the border, at least in its preliminary stages.

He was a man of position, wealth, and reputation, and certainly he would expect his daughter to make a match with one of similar importance. He was yet under fifty, with a youthful, ruddy face.

Major Carew seemed to feel his daughter's indifferent bearing toward me. The weight of obligation rested upon him and he sought to make amends, speaking for himself with such warmth that my own sense of discomfort increased. I wished to be exactly like other men, and not one whom it was necessary to address in an apologetic way, as if he desired to like me and did like me despite the effort that it cost him. He said much of the Western country, its beauty and fertility, and the rapid growth that would attend it when the Indians should be conquered.

Jasper entered the room while we were talking, and turned his back upon me, which I thought decidedly preferable to his face, but he soon wheeled about and showed me a countenance expanding with triumph. He was firmly convinced, so I felt, that he was making good progress with Miss Carew, and was quite willing to let me see his satisfaction because of it. Jasper in the worldly sense was certainly a good match for her, as Major Carew could not fail to know. But I was silent, not wishing to reply to him in any form or fashion, and I realized that, despite the favour of General Wayne and others, I should have difficulty in maintaining my position in the army. Now that the first step had been taken, this made me all the more determined to go on to the end of the road upon which I had started.

I walked with Mr. and Mrs. Winchester to the two-story log house which they occupied for the present, and each of the two men carried a pistol in his pocket, as the wilderness still converged so close about Cincinnati that a prowling Indian might seek in the darkness to take a scalp and then dash to the woods with it.

I seemed quiet and sad to them as they accused me of being in a gloomy state and rallied me upon it, but I made some trivial reply and disclaimed any such feeling. Then they spoke of Miss Carew, her beauty and her grace.

"It is reported that she will marry Major Jasper Lee," said Mrs. Winchester, "and she seems to have a mind for him; but I do not trust the man. The heart in him is not right, or his eyes lie. Yet she will marry him, unless some other bold wooer defeats him."

But I inveighed against women, saying that with a few exceptions, such as Mrs. Winchester, they were of a heartless nature, and overfond of conquest.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PRIZE OF SKILL

It was not the intent of General Wayne, having conferred honour upon me, to let me live a life of leisure. He had been selected by the President for one of the most onerous tasks ever allotted to man—the conquest of savages inhabiting an unbroken wilderness half as large as Europe and the protection of a border a thousand miles long. He was to do this with three thousand raw troops, re-enforced by a few hardy frontiersmen, while the fierce savages, flushed with their great triumph over St. Clair, roamed the forest at will, as elusive as phantoms, but incessantly striking here and there when least expected, and keeping the entire border one line of flame and blood. Such was the work that now lay before Mad Anthony, and I was soon to know that the iron soul of this man, the most daring and sanguine general of the Revolution, sometimes despaired, though it was only for a moment, and none but the officers nearest him knew it.

The Government was weak and its means were small, but it did the best it could, sending troops which, as in the case of St. Clair, were poor, while the Kentucky militia rallied nobly to the common cause. Major Carew had brought a detachment from Kentucky, which he was incessantly drilling, while I was set to work with some of the raw recruits from the East, Osseo standing by, and regarding me with a mixture of amazement and amusement.

It was the third or fourth day after my arrival, and I had my men upon the little parade ground teaching them the sort of open-order tactics we expected to use in our forest campaign, a more flexible discipline than that of armies intended to act against a white enemy in the open country, and despite the perversity of my exceedingly independent troops, I found a very keen pleasure in the task. I had done this often ten or twelve years before, whipping awkward York and Jersey countrymen into shape for combat, and the old work brought back to me the light feelings of former days. I have noticed that there is nothing so effective as a familiar occupation to restore the average frame of mind. Thus I was engrossed in my task, shouting orders at my men, and telling them not to do the things they were doing, when I noticed that Osseo had the company of other spectators. They were Miss Carew, Mr. and Mrs Winchester, Jasper, and a young officer named Lawless, who was much with Jasper and whom I did not like.

I left the men presently and joined the spectators, Miss Carew receiving me with the same unconcerned manner that had marked her before. We talked somewhat of the coming campaign and its prospects, and young Lawless at length commented upon the fact that I was now a drill master.

"I should think of you, Captain Lee," he said, "in any other rôle than that of a teacher."

It was a pointed and gross insult, when my history is considered, and I had no doubt then, as I have none now, that Jasper suggested to him this line of conduct. I had expected, situated as I was, to encounter sneering remarks, and I merely replied, though with intentional point:

"There are many of us, Mr. Lawless, who need teachers."

He said nothing, restrained perhaps by the presence of the ladies, and I was of a mind to let the matter

pass, but presently, when he found an opportunity to speak to me in their absence, he said:

"I should resent your insulting remark were you or could you be on an equality with me, but all here know what you are and have been."

I saw that he was merely a snapping little puppy, set on by the larger dog behind him, Jasper, and I was able to reply quite calmly:

"Then, Mr. Lawless, you should charge that fancied inequality to your good fortune, for if we were to fight I should most certainly kill you. I give you this warning in order that you may not force a quarrel upon me. You can ask Major Lee there if I was not known as the best swordsman in the Continental army, and every frontiersman in Cincinnati will tell you that I am at least as good a shot as there is in the West. I say these things to you not as a boast, but as simple facts, lest you risk your life rashly."

He turned pale and his under lip whitened. I fancied that he was beginning to find the baiting of the bear not the delicate sport of his hopes. But Jasper hastened to his relief.

"Come away, Lawless," he said. "I doubt whether you could insult Captain Lee."

"He could not," I said with emphasis, "nor could you."

They turned their backs upon me and swaggered off together; but as I have alluded to the baiting of the bear, I foresaw that more sport of the kind would be attempted, and I was of a mind that those who tried it should suffer. Of a certainty I should not turn the other cheek; I fancy that the authority of the Bible was intended for particular cases, and not for general practice.

As we were leaving the parade ground, the drill being finished, Miss Carew came over to me and said:

"You will, of course, fight that man who insulted you?"

I was surprised at the question, likewise at her emphasis, but I replied that such was not my intent.

"How can you maintain yourself in General Wayne's army if you do not resent such attacks?" she asked.

"Do you really wish me to retain my position in it?"

"You saved me from the savages, and I would be ungrateful if I did not desire your advancement."

I think that "gratitude" and "grateful" become at times the most hateful of words; they can stand sponsor for so many things which one would like to credit to another cause; so I could answer only with a shrug of the shoulders, and at this moment Winchester and his lady joined us.

I heard the next day that young Lawless was assailing my reputation with great assiduity, but having no wish to pose as a duellist or to foment broils at a time when union was necessary, I let the matter run for the time being; and I noticed that the officers were soon divided into two camps concerning me—one which gave me the cold shoulder, and the other which received me as a welcome addition. Old Joe Grimes came at this time from one of his scouting expeditions, and the pugnacious borderer, true to his instincts, seemed to think that I had lowered myself greatly by becoming a soldier.

"I thought you were too good for that, Lee," he said. "Soldiers don't know anything; and to think of you putting on a uniform! It's like a chief in a petticoat."

He shook his head more in sadness than reproach, and would not be pacified; yet he was forced to admit that General Wayne showed some evidence of common sense, and was undertaking his business in a more promising manner than any other general who had come to the West.

Miss Carew was still in the town, and so far as I could learn had no intention of returning soon to Kentucky. It was now said that she purposed to go with Major Carew to our advanced post, Fort Greeneville, far to the north, and noticing the extent of her influence over her father, I was convinced that she could get his permission if, in truth, she wished to go; nor was General Wayne himself, though no longer a young man—which, however, is no bar—at all impervious to the smiles of fair young womanhood, and I felt sure that she could obtain his consent too.

I was certain now that Rose Carew had become what would have been called in the Old World lady of quality; at this little frontier village she reigned a belle, and though there were present many young army officers who knew the best that the society of the East offered, she could call any of them to her feet when she chose. It was evident too that she enjoyed admiration; I do not undertake to say that such a feeling is not natural in a young girl, but it may be carried a trifle far, I think.

Although we were very busy with drill and preparations, there was time for amateur gaieties, and I managed to procure for myself a new uniform, attired in which I sometimes hung upon the outskirts of the festivities and held short converse twice or thrice with Miss Carew. Upon such an occasion I told her that it was my intent to go once more to my old haunts in the East when the present campaign was finished. She gave me an odd look, and then said in a tone that was quite without expression:

"You told me once that you would never go back."

"I have changed my mind," I said.

"It is always one's privilege to do so."

"I shall come to see you there," I said boldly.

But she did not answer.

We had target shooting the next day on the hills back of the river, this being a most necessary practice for the recruits from the East, and General Wayne as an incentive had offered some prizes for which all might compete. 'Twas natural, too, in such a small place, that the civilians should come forth to see, and among them were Miss Carew and Mrs. Winchester. Two or three rude benches had been fitted up for these spectators, and the rest of us stood about watching the shooting. Jasper was present, and constituted himself the shadow of Miss Carew, making comment upon the marksmen, not all of which was flattering. I kept aloof, although Winchester and his lady were most friendly and would have me come and talk with them, but I had small fancy for Jasper's company.

The chief prize was a tiny silver bugle, and of course the ordinary soldiers had no chance whatever to win it in competition with the frontiersmen, although two or three of them entered. Nevertheless, the test excited much interest, and I learned presently that Jasper would make a trial. It was Winchester who informed me, and he added:

"He is sure to win it. Major Lee is a fine shot, and he is anxious to distinguish himself in the presence of the ladies. I don't know that I like him, and I would beat him if I could. He means to give the prize to Miss Carew."

His last statement contained suggestion, but I did not accept it, and presently they began to shoot at the targets. As Winchester had foreseen, Jasper soon proved himself superior to the others, but the competition was still open. A test of this kind is always sure to arouse my interest, and I joined the group about the marksmen.

"Why do you not enter, Captain Lee?" asked Mrs. Winchester. "Mr. Winchester has told me marvellous tales of your skill with the rifle."

"The skill was his once, but he lost it," said Miss Carew.

I looked steadily at her. I was surprised that she should speak such words, and also that she should speak at all. But I would prove them false, and take from Jasper the pleasure of presenting her the prize, and from her the pleasure of receiving it at his hand. An orderly quickly brought me my rifle, which even as an officer I had not abandoned.

"Then you really have the courage to try?" said Miss Carew as I took the firelock from the man.

"Miss Carew," I replied in a low voice, for her tone had cut me, "you should be the last to ask me such a question."

She reddened and for a moment her lip quivered. Then the look of cold pride which she now wore habitually returned, and she said:

"You need not remind me of the past, Captain Lee. I do not speak of it now because I am not able to express to you the greatness of my debt."

Then she began to talk to Jasper, who had just made a splendid shot, drilling out the centre of a sixpence at forty yards.

"Don't let him beat you," whispered Winchester. "The man loves to triumph over anybody, and most of all over you."

I nodded to him and asked them to move the target back a considerable distance, which being done, I also drilled the centre of a sixpence. Osseo, in the brilliant garb which he always wore in the village, was near me, and he uttered his satisfaction at my shot.

"Lee shoots straight while pretty squaw looks on," he said.

"Well, Osseo," I replied, "would not you do your best under the circumstances?"

His eyes twinkled, but he said nothing.

Jasper equalled my shot, and so did old Joe Grimes, whereupon the target was moved back yet farther, and Grimes failed, but both Jasper and I hit it fair and true.

"Your cousin is also a great marksman," said Miss Carew to me.

"You wish him to win the prize?" I said.

"I wish it to go to the one who deserves it," she replied.

I may not boast, but the shooting that had been done was really child's play to me, inasmuch as I had a natural gift for marksmanship, and it had been trained by a lifetime of practice. So I asked one of the soldiers to take a sixpence and toss it in the air at a convenient distance. Jasper frowned at this; and young Lawless, who was near him, said in a low voice something about me, all the words of which I did not catch, but it was of the purport that a man with my history ought not to be allowed in the contest. I saw well that I should have to punish Lawless for insolence, and I made a silent note of the matter.

"Proceed," I said.

The soldier tossed the sixpence in the air, and I sent a bullet through its centre before it touched the ground. The frontiersmen and the soldiers gave me much applause, and so did Mr. and Mrs. Winchester. Miss Carew made no demonstration. "She thinks that Jasper is beaten," I said to myself, "and she does not like me any better because it is I who is about to defeat him."

Jasper made some demur about the test, claiming that it was most unusual, but the officer in charge would not listen to his grumbling. So the sixpence was tossed up a second time; Jasper fired, missed, and the prize was mine.

"You have won," said Jasper, turning away and shrugging his shoulders, as if that which I had won was not worth the winning.

They gave me the prize, and I, knowing well that it was the custom upon such occasions for the winner to present it to a lady, did not hesitate, as I had made up my mind beforehand. I took the silver trifle and, placing it in the hand of Miss Carew, said:

"Will you accept this from me? Even had my opponent won, I think that it would have come to you."

"Is that why you offer it to me now?" she asked.

There was, in truth, a question in her voice as well as in her words, and I replied:

"No, I offer it to you because it is mine to offer, and because it is you whom I wish to have it."

She took the trifle, but with only a word of thanks, and then all of us left the parade ground, the sport being over. I believed that my gift had embarrassed Miss Carew, and I was sure that Jasper, Lawless, and two or three others would insist that I, a man with a black page in his history, should not have had such an opportunity. For that reason I rejoiced at my action.

Winchester escorted the ladies, and as I walked toward my quarters Lawless brushed by me and again made supercilious remarks, half under his breath, which he could claim were or were not meant for me, as he chose. But I did not intend to allow him such latitude, and I seized him by the arm.

He demanded in most indignant tones that I unhand him, but I retained my grasp.

"Mr. Lawless, you have purposely and with malice made yourself offensive to me on two or three occasions," I said, "and I warn you that its repetition will be dangerous to you. I told you the other day what I could do with weapons. You saw just now my ability with the rifle. Look at that squirrel in the tree across the ravine."

He looked in spite of himself, and drawing my pistol from my belt, I fired. The squirrel dropped from the tree, dead.

"Now come into the room of Captain Hardy," I continued, "and I will show you what I can do with the sword."

As my hand was still upon his arm, there was nothing for him to do but to comply, and Captain Hardy at my request produced two swords.

"Here's your weapon," I said, thrusting the hilt of one into his hand while I took the other. "Now touch me if you can; I promise not to hurt you."

He gave me a look of rage, and thrust at me with the sword, but I caught it upon the blade of my own, and with a twist of the wrist drew it from his grasp. It fell ringing upon the floor.

"Do you wish to try again?" I asked.

He was furious, and, snatching up the weapon, ran at me. But the sword was drawn from his hand a second time, and was thrown against the wall. He made a third attempt, and the result was the same.

"I hope you are now convinced," I said, "that if you seek a quarrel with me your life is mine to do with as I choose. Do not seek that quarrel, and let us be friends."

He shook my hand, though with small grace, and hurried off to his quarters.

CHAPTER XXIX

A FEATHERED MESSAGE

I SLEPT in a small log-hut on the fringe of the village, the rooms in the fort being limited, and Osseo now and then shared my quarters, but oftener passed the night in the woods upon some mysterious errand, coming into Cincinnati or leaving it as he chose. I knew that if he received proper treatment, his dignity being considered at all times, he would prove of great value to the commander, and General Wayne showed good understanding in the matter. Osseo visited him more than once at his quarters, and they were long in secret consultation.

"The Black Snake * is a great chief," he said to me after one of these conferences. "He will not ride into the forest on the shoulders of his men."

One morning, about an hour before daylight, I was awakened by a light sound at the door, as of something striking against it. I was alone, and one trained to forest life is suspicious of every noise; so I sprang to my feet, and seizing my rifle, rushed out. No one was there, and the sound was not repeated, but when I glanced at the door I saw by the wan light an Indian arrow buried deep in the wood, the feathered head still quivering with the force of the impact. It had been discharged from a bow, bent by a man of great power. That

* The Indian name at that time for Wayne; they called him after his victory "The Storm," or "The Tornado."

I knew at the first glance, and I cast about me for some point at which the bowman had been hidden. Then I remembered a clump of bushes inside our lines and at a considerable distance from my cabin, but not so far that a man of unusual strength might not reach it with an arrow. Moreover, an Indian of great daring could creep at night into the clump of bushes and then escape unobserved, save by the most watchful sentry.

It would have been the impulse of a man without experience of wilderness life to rush for the clump of bushes that he might catch or at least pursue the bowman; but I knew that the savage, ere the arrow left the bow, had glided back into the impenetrable forest, and I knew, too, that the missile was not sent in search of a human target; it was a sign, a signal, a message of some kind from somebody, and to me.

I looked thoughtfully at the arrow and the little black feathers still faintly quivering in the head of the shaft. Then I bent down and examined these feathers more closely. They were small and black, a jetty hue, but they were from the wing of the eagle. Now I knew. It was the arrow of Hoyoquim, the Black Eagle, the Wyandot chief, the man who had held Rose Carew in his power, and who beyond a doubt was seeking to hold her there again. He had been in the clump of bushes, and I knew it as well as if I had seen him when his mighty brown arm drew the bow.

My heart sank with a sudden dread for Rose Carew. She was a wilful woman, and she was going with us to Fort Greeneville, our most advanced and dangerous post, far into the Indian country, where naught save strong arms and strong hearts could protect her. She might fall again into the hands of Hoyoquim, and then there would be none, neither Osseo nor I nor any other, to save her. I had a bad quarter of an hour, after which I took my resolution. I would put the case to Rose Ca-

rew in such manner that she must change her purpose and stay behind.

I made haste to find her while still hot with my plan, and I had not far to seek. She was sitting alone upon the portico in front of Mr. Converse's house. All our early builders of pretentious homes in the West followed the Greek styles of architecture, and were fond of columns and pillars, of wood most often, but painted white to resemble marble. As I saw her sitting there among the white pillars, and herself in white, she seemed to me more than ever out of place in the Indian-haunted wilderness, a flower whose home was in the peaceful and cultivated garden, and not in the wild woods. It was impossible for me to change again this sophisticated woman into the shy maid who fled with me through the forest. And yet I was not willing to lose either.

I had expected to be received with coldness, and the warmth of her manner, while a surprise, pleased me more than I am willing to confess. She gave me both her hands—an impulse I thought it, due perhaps to a sudden memory of the days we had spent together in the forest, for as I saw her now she was a woman of variable moods.

"You are in your uniform, your true uniform, Captain Lee," she said. "I told you long ago that you should return to your place in the world, but you would not believe me then."

"You were right and I was wrong," I said, "and while I rejected your advice at the time, I am wise enough to accept it now. I mean to win back my old position. When this campaign is finished I shall return to the East."

I spoke with decision, meaning that she should understand me clearly, but she was silent, nor could I draw from her looks either approval or disapproval of my words.

"'Tis, however, a matter of small importance com-

pared with another of which I shall speak to you," I said, "and if I have ever served you in any wise I pray that the memory of it will make you give some heed now to what I say."

"Tell it to me," she replied, neither by word nor tone making any promise.

"I hear that you intend to go with the soldiers to Fort Greeneville. I ask you not to do so."

She bent upon me a look of inquiry—a look that was without surprise, as if she had half divined my question before the utterance of it.

"Do not go," I repeated. "Fort Greeneville is far in the Indian country. None can ever tell what will happen when opposed to such a numerous and active foe as the northwestern savages. Remember the fate of St. Clair's army, and your own narrow escape. You know that the Indian chief, Hoyoquim, will seek to recapture you. There is no place in this column for a woman."

"But other women are going with it?"

"Not such as you."

"Their lives are as precious to them as mine is to me. Besides, my father is going. Should I not watch over him and tend his hurts if he is wounded? Is it the custom of our border women to shrink from danger? I shall go to Fort Greeneville with the army."

"Even if I beg you not to do so by the memory of your former dangers?"

"I shall go in any event," she replied firmly. "It is now for me to make a request of you, Captain Lee. Do not seek to persuade me against my will. My reasons for going, perhaps, are good."

"I can not accede to the request," I said.

"And I can not accede to yours; so I am not more obstinate than you," she said.

Then I told her of Hoyoquim's arrow, its obvious intent as a threat, and the extent of the danger to be dreaded from the chief's wily and tenacious character.

But I could not shake her in her purpose, and I could not alarm her either with the threat of dangers to be incurred, or with reminders of those past. "I shall go," she would say, and she seemed to me to show a resolution most singular when time and circumstance are considered.

"Would you have me to be less brave than other women, who you say are of a lower grade than I?" she asked.

She smiled upon me for the first time since the conversation took this course, and then, shifting the subject, she became again the girl of the wilderness, my wood nymph, simple, unaffected, speaking of the dangers that we had shared, and from which I had saved her. It was but a brief glimpse of this Rose Carew that she gave me; then she was the woman of the drawing-room once more, talking wittily and brilliantly of social life in New York and Philadelphia, and speaking with the ease and familiarity of one who was in the heart of it. I felt her power; she had been able in former days to call up with vividness that larger world to me, but now she made the reality itself pass before my eyes. I was seized with an inextinguishable longing to become a part of it again, and take my ancient place there, and I knew even then that it was she, however unconsciously, who was most potent in drawing me on. And she did so all the more because hers was now an elusive character to me. I seemed to meet her here and there, and my mind touched hers, but it was only for a moment; then she was gone, and I was left in the air.

"My father and Major Lee are coming," she said presently.

"Then I shall go," I said.

But she bade me stay, and I passively waited, while her father and my cousin Jasper walked side by side along the footpath that led up the hill to the house.

Major Carew greeted me again with warmth, a warmth that seemed to me slightly in excess of reality, and Jasper nodded coolly, as was his wont.

"What do you think your cousin has been asking me?" said Miss Carew to Jasper.

"Nothing that he should not, I hope," replied Jasper stiffly. I fancy that he did not like her use of the word "cousin" when speaking of me, though he used it at times himself, and perhaps I had as little reason as he to be pleased with it, though far from resenting such a use by her.

"That I do not go with the column to Fort Greeneville," she said, supplying her own answer.

"Miss Carew rejects my advice, but I am sure that I am right," I interrupted, and I related again the incident of Hoyoquim and the arrow, Jasper and Major Carew listening intently. I glanced at Jasper as I came near to the end of my story, and I saw his lips turn quite white. I knew full well that he saw the shadow of Hoyoquim across his path.

"I think that Captain Lee judges correctly," he said when my tale was finished. "You should not go to Fort Greeneville, Miss Carew, as beyond a doubt you would be in great danger there. It is not even sure that you are free from it here. And, moreover"—his air growing gallant—"if you stay here I may be able to watch over you."

She looked at him in surprise, not seeming to take his meaning. But I could have sworn that I was reading the processes of Jasper's cunning mind.

"It may be that I shall stay at Cincinnati when the army advances," he said quite coolly. "This is a sort of base for us, and it is likely that I shall be put in command of it by General Wayne. I should prefer to go on and meet the savages, but in war one must obey."

His manner seemed quite real, and, I was sure, deceived all but myself. But he changed the drift of the

talk quickly, leading it upon lighter matters, and addressing himself more particularly to Miss Carew. Jasper, as I had often noticed, was not without a certain charm for women. He possessed a power that seemed to draw them despite themselves, and now I observed with pain that Rose Carew hearkened closely to him, his conversation being of that light nature pleasing to a woman. I saw, too, that Major Carew looked upon Jasper with approval, particularly when Jasper was speaking to his daughter, and I recalled with a sudden sinking of the heart that there were no reasons why he should not; to any one who did not know him so well as I he might in very truth seem most desirable. My own position was of the lowest when compared with his, but when one has been battered about much by Fortune he sometimes reaches a point where fresh blows, instead of shattering, merely harden, and my resolution grew stronger as I matched myself anew with Jasper in the contest apparently so unequal. Jasper and I left the house at the same time, and when we were yet within hearing of Major Carew and his daughter he tapped me on the shoulder with an appearance of great friendliness and said:

"Let us walk together, John; there are some matters which I wish to discuss with you."

I signified assent, and side by side we strolled down the path. Almost any one beholding the two men proceeding in such manner might have taken them for the best of comrades.

We passed on until our figures were lost to the observers at the house, if there were any, and I waited for Jasper to lead the way to the topics upon which he desired to speak with me. We were upon a slope of the hills which inclose Cincinnati, and a beautiful spectacle was spread out at our feet—the clustering houses of the little town almost hidden in the foliage, the broad and curving flood of the yellow Ohio, and be-

yond it the dark green mass of Kentucky, hidden in its deep woods, with the silver thread of the Licking winding through.

"John," said Jasper at length, "I think it well that we should know each what the other means."

"The knowledge is already attained," I replied. "I do not believe that either is mistaken about it."

"Whatever your crimes may have been," he said with some appearance of passion, "I have never taken you for a fool before. But now what else can you be? You, a convicted traitor, a broken man, an exile in the woods, to pretend to the hand of Rose Carew! Withdraw from such an absurd position and I shall help you all I can to regain your old name. You know this border warfare, and your services here may be an offset. I am not without influence in the East, and a good word for you there can go far."

Long and silent meditation in the woods may give one the power to read the hearts of men, and I believed that his thoughts then were not unknown to me.

"If I am so low and my rivalry is so preposterous," I replied, "why, then, do you fear it?"

He winced a bit, as if I had made a hit, and then he replied:

"You have some claim on Miss Carew's gratitude, and that, as you well know, is a strong influence upon the mind of a girl."

I felt the hot blood coursing through my veins, but I was able to restrain my temper, responding, I think, with a fair degree of coolness:

"Cousin Jasper, you and I often look at the same thing in a different way, and for that reason perhaps you are unable to understand that it is impossible for me to remind Miss Carew of such a thing as gratitude."

"Your folly is greater than I can understand," he said, affecting not to notice the point, "and I give you fair warning that if you presume to oppose me in my

dearest wish I shall fight you with all the weapons at my command. Having an inclination to spare your feelings, I have said very little concerning you here. But I shall not be so considerate now. I make no bones about it. I shall let everybody know what you are. As you yourself are aware, you are not fit for the society of gentlemen."

"Gentlemen of your kind—certainly not!" I replied.

We walked on together, and the chance observer might still have thought that we were the best of friends, as he kept his temper admirably, and I was careful never to raise my voice above its usual pitch. But he uttered further threats, and on the whole I was glad to hear them, preferring this open declaration of war to a false politeness. When we parted I was aware that I was likely soon to encounter unpleasant incidents, but I was quite resolved to give him blow for blow, and my mind glowed with the strength of its hostile purpose.

CHAPTER XXX

HOT HEADS AND COOL

THERE was no immediate military duty for me to perform, and I went to the little cabin which I occupied with Osseo, and staying there awhile, turned over in my mind the events of the day. The chief was gone in the forest upon some errand of his own, probably one of those scouting expeditions that he loved, and I was alone.

I had spoken to Jasper in hot blood when I made my boast that I would fight him to the end; but now, when I sat in silence and the heat was gone from my veins, I felt a sense of despair. Could I surmount such obstacles, and if I could, should I? Was I not right that day in Danville when I turned from the welcoming light in Rose Carew's eyes? I wondered if I had become a worse man than I was then. But the absence of that welcoming light now, her very elusiveness, as I have said before, drew me on. It is an old tale that we want most that which we can not have, and crushing down all compunctions, I resolved to follow the course that I had chosen. Nevertheless, my deep depression continued, and although I would not have had it so if I could, I felt that it were better had I never seen her; then I might have continued my way in the woods, content with a life which, however different from the old, was not without its allurements. "Ah, Osseo," I said, "you are the truest and most unselfish type that I have

met. You alone have been faithful to me in the face of everything!"

I did not hear a step in the cabin, but felt a heavy hand upon my back, and a cheerful voice cried in my ear:

"John Lee giving himself over to a fit of the blue devils! I never saw you, lad, at such a business before. What ails you?"

It was Winchester, and I was most glad to see him. I could never look upon this Englishman's honest, ruddy, and open face and not feel that I had another friend as trusty and stanch as Osseo himself. Although he could not but be familiar with the tale about me, he asked me for no syllable of defence, and never showed by either word or deed that he was so much as conscious of it.

Then he sat down and told me the gossip of the little town. The advance to Fort Greeneville would take place very soon, and it was now known to all that Miss Carew would go with the column, and for the matter of that Mrs. Winchester also would accompany us, as he expected to take her with him through the Indian country on his way to a British post near Lake Erie. He had no fear of the savages, the British being on excellent terms with them.

He talked so gaily and brightly, retailing the news of this little frontier town, that all my cares fled away like a mist before a fresh wind, and then, when he saw that I entered into his spirit of lightness, his own face took on a shade of gravity.

"I think I should warn you, Lee," he said, "that your road is likely to grow a trifle rougher, and that, too, pretty soon."

I divined at once that my good cousin was at work. Well, he did not delay with the task that he had set himself, and on the whole I was not sorry. When one is expecting a hard fight he does not like to linger.

"I heard that fellow Lawless say something about you as I came up here," continued Winchester.

"And naturally you inferred, as I should have done in your place, that it was prompted by my cousin, Major Jasper Lee," I said.

He was silent, not wishing to deny it.

"I have been fighting in one war or another since I was sixteen years old," I said, "and I have no impulse to shirk it now."

"Nor would I if I were you; the sooner an inevitable trouble is brought to an issue the better." And then, with a sudden apparent change of the subject, "there is to be a gathering of officers to-night at the quarters of Captain Romney—General Wayne allows a little relaxation now and then, wisely, I think—and almost all the men whom you know will be there; some who are civilians, too, myself included. Romney told me to ask you in his name to come. You'll do it, won't you?"

I saw that he wished me to accept; I saw, too, that he expected my situation there to be made unpleasant, but would have me go despite it. This confirmed me in my determination, and I replied promptly in the affirmative.

"Then wait here, and I'll come by about dusk for you," he said.

I thanked him with a look for his friendly act, and in the afternoon when I went upon the parade ground to drill my little troop I felt a certain exultation at the sense of coming conflict.

When the time arrived I made a most rigorous toilet. In my early and callow years I may have been somewhat of a dandy, which I take to be a harmless vanity, it being better to err upon that side than rush to the other extreme, and to-night I felt a return of the old fastidiousness. I brushed my uniform, not a bad one in itself, with utmost care, and I tied a very full and

flowing neck ribbon in a fancy knot at my throat. Then I saw that the sword at my belt made a correct angle with my body, and I was just putting on my buckskin gloves when Winchester entered.

"On my soul, Lee," he cried, "you snuff out a civilian like myself as if I were a cheap tallow dip! May I indeed have the honour of going with you, or shall I remain here overpowered?"

"Shall I do?" I said, standing before him.

"Admirably. Faith, John, you are quite resplendent," he replied, and hooking his arm in mine, after the fashion of our time, he led the way to Captain Romney's quarters.

A friend of the worthy captain, an immigrant to Cincinnati, had built a large double house on one of the hills, and in the owner's absence our prospective host had been permitted to take it as his camp, a privilege to be valued, as General Wayne himself did not have a better place in which to live.

Lights were flashing from the windows of the house, and as we approached we heard the clatter of joyous voices, some of which were raised already to an unusual pitch. I should say here that our border armies always brought with them the virtues and vices of the East. We were then, as the nature of our lives made us, often a fiery and violent race. Officers were quick to resent real or fancied insults, and the finger flew quickly to haft or trigger. The duello, practised in all the polite world, travelled with the army into this immeasurable wilderness. General Wayne himself, with all his sternness, could not prevent it, and I remember that upon this very campaign two young officers scarce in their twenties quarrelled over a trifle, and fought with such fury that both were slain. Nor was this a solitary example. So I knew that if any trouble were to arise at the gathering I should be expected to make good my point of view with sword or pistol. I was not loath, and

my hand unconsciously slipped to the handle of the weapon that hung by my side. The "feel" of it was good.

Captain Romney gave us welcome, my reception not differing from Winchester's, and I judged that the captain was willing to accept me as one of his brother officers without either coldness or undue warmth, with which I was content.

The two rooms of the cabin were filled with men, and Romney had made a brave and not altogether unsuccessful effort to reproduce Eastern splendour, or what seemed splendour in comparison with the border. He had decorated the place rather handsomely with furs and skins, spreading the larger out as rugs, and there were wine and cards for all who chose to drink or play, and if I knew my own time and race, most would choose both. Soldiers ever take their customs with them.

I saw Jasper in a corner laughing and talking in the most expansive manner, and near him his satellite Lawless, his face already flushed with wine. Not far away was Captain Hardy, and scattered about were nearly all the younger officers of our army. It was just such a scene as I had witnessed more than once in the days of the Revolution after the French came over to join us. But here the wilderness setting gave a different effect.

When time and place are suitable, one quickly resumes old habits which circumstance has compelled him to drop, and soon I was playing bezique at a table as carelessly as if it were not a dozen years since I had sat at the game. We played in one room and we talked in another. I was never a gambler by nature, merely hazarding a few shillings and pence for the sake of social feeling; and presently, when my wagers left me as I was at the beginning, I quit the table and went into the room where conversation was going forward.

The older officers had gathered there, and were telling stories of their experiences, to which I was soon asked to contribute. There was an ancient tale of an escape of mine from the savages well known along the border, and growing unduly, perhaps, as it passed from one to another, which I was called upon to relate. Just as I finished the story a great burst of laughter came from the next room, where everybody was visible to us, the wide door between standing open.

We naturally looked up to see the cause of this laughter, which was followed by perfect silence, interrupted in a moment or two by the high-pitched voice of Lawless, whose face had grown redder under the influence of the cards and more liquor. The expression of his eyes indicated his arrival at the degree of intoxication which breeds utter recklessness, but the attention given him proved that what he was saying was not without interest.

"Believe me, gentlemen, it is most preposterous, but it is true," he said. "I swear it, and if my oath be not sufficient I can produce witnesses. Such presumption I never heard of before, but it only proves how shameless the fellow is. He was drummed out of the old Continental army for treason—cold-blooded treason. I have seen a copy of the records myself. How he escaped the rope I don't know, but they let him come out here in the woods to live with the bears and the Indians. Now, this fellow, as he enters the settlements, happens to clap eyes on one of our maidens from the East, a girl beautiful, rich, and among the best born. Instead of keeping his proper distance and admiring her from it as any dog might, he immediately pays court to her and sticks to her like an army to a besieged city—'pon honour I'm telling you the facts—and I think the fellow ought to be driven back into the woods with the lash across his bare back, 'pon honour I do."

Lawless was a fool; moreover, he was drunk, and he

was prompted by a far more cunning man, or he never would have made this speech.

There was a dead silence, and everybody began to look at me, for of course my story was known to all, and Lawless's meaning was too plain. It was broken a moment later by the clear voice of Jasper, asking:

"Are you quite sure of all that you say, Lawless? Have you yourself witnessed it, or is it a story that has been told to you by others?"

"My own eyes have given me the proof and yours have done the same for you," said the reckless youngster.

Again the ominous silence of expectation ensued, and now there was not a pair of eyes in the room, unless Lawless's be excepted, not bent on me. I saw that I could not linger in my reply, as the identity of Lawless's "villain" was too obvious; it was well for me to begin at once, but I felt a deep regret that Rose Carew should be mentioned, as there could be no doubt about the identity of the girl whom Lawless meant any more than there could be about mine.

I rose to my feet—I was glad that so many were looking on—and I walked to the table beside which Lawless sat. I do not boast when I say that I was quite cool, because I had prepared myself for such scenes.

"Mr. Lawless," I said, "you are a fool when you are sober, and you are a greater one when you are drunk, which you are now. You have attempted to insult me—not for the first time, be it said—and I have tried to avoid it, but I suppose that I shall have to kill you as a warning to those who are pushing you on."

I looked at Jasper here, and his face did not change; but I saw his fingers twitch.

"I did not call your name, Captain Lee," said Lawless, "but since the cap is such a fine fit for you, on your head it must sit. But I will not fight you. I have

not yet sunk so low that I can cross swords with a condemned traitor."

"Perhaps then the Long Knife whose mouth is full of vain words will fight me," said a voice over my shoulder.

There was a start of surprise from everybody. Osseo had entered so quietly, and the attention of all was so thoroughly concentrated upon Lawless and me, that his presence was not noted until he spoke.

"The Long Knife is not a great man among his own people," resumed Osseo. "He is but that"—and he snapped his fingers—"and Osseo is a chief; he has looked upon danger as the Long Knife looks upon the face of a fair girl, and the ways of the white man are not his ways, but he will fight the Boy-of-big-words as he chooses, because he loves Lee, by whose side he has fought many good fights, with whom he has shared his last venison, and whom he knows to be such a man that the Boy-of-big-words can never be his equal, though he live more years than the oldest chief in all the woods."

Osseo spoke with the sententiousness of the Indian, standing perfectly erect, his tall form towering over all and his coal-black eyes passing defiantly around the circle. I saw that the chief's words had made a deep impression. The Indian does not practise the duel in our set and formal fashion, and such an offer, coming in such a way, surprised the officers and pleased the more reckless.

"A duel with swords or pistols between an Indian chief and a lieutenant! 'twill be worth seeing," I heard one mutter.

But Captain Romney interfered, and I did not know until afterward that Winchester had been talking to him while Osseo was speaking.

"Yours is a noble offer, chief," he said, "and does credit to your friendship; but if there is to be a duel, Lieutenant Lawless must meet Captain Lee."

"But consider what Captain Lee is!" exclaimed Jasper, seeing the plan to disgrace me suddenly go wrong. "How can Lawless meet him?"

"I am the host here," said Captain Romney with dignity, "and I have already consulted with those who know the code. Lieutenant Lawless must meet Captain Lee, if the latter wishes it. All of us know of the charge against Captain Lee—a charge that unhappily ended in conviction; and yet there are many who still do not believe him guilty—I among the number, I am proud to say. Neither does our commander-in-chief. At any rate, Captain Lee is one of General Wayne's most trusted officers; as such no one can insult him and refuse him satisfaction."

A murmur of approval arose from more than half of those present, and I was deeply grateful to them. It seemed that wanton fate, the sport of which I had been so long, was determined now to make some amends.

"Do you insist that Lieutenant Lawless meet you?" asked Captain Romney of me.

"I do," I replied.

Lawless was silent. I think that the effect of his liquor was wearing off, and he turned ashy pale. He gave Jasper a furious glance, and then turned whiter than ever. He knew perfectly well that he was no match for me with any weapon, and either he must avoid the meeting with all the implication of cowardice or leave his life in my hands.

"General Wayne forbids duelling, but it is not my affair," resumed Captain Romney. "I have nothing more to do with it."

Then he turned away to a game of cards, and we knew very well that while he would make no preparations for the duel he would likewise be no tale-bearer.

"I fancy that the nicely prepared scheme of somebody has come to grief," said Winchester to me a little later. He, too, so I saw, had divined Jasper's plan,

and I surmised that he was not without a hand in the spoiling of it.

While I had friends I also had enemies, and the company seemed to divide over me, making me an issue, a circumstance which I found very unpleasant, but which for the present I could not avoid. Lawless was playing cards noisily in the next room, and laughing frequently with an air of the most reckless gaiety. But his mask was transparent; his nerves were upset, and he plainly saw death before him. However, I had no intention of sparing his feelings; he had insulted me too grievously to be let off lightly; moreover, he was the willing tool in a plot, and I deemed it right that he should suffer such mental agonies. Jasper spoke only when he was compelled to do so, but he could not refrain from biting his lip, and I enjoyed his anxiety.

I stayed an hour or more after the quarrel, and then, when I felt that I could leave without forfeiting my self-respect, I said my adieux and departed. I sat at the window of our little cabin, it now being after midnight. Osseo, who came in later, also sat down near the window. By the clear moonlight I saw that he was smiling to himself, and I waited patiently until he should condescend to explain.

"White man great fool," he said presently. "He drinks much fire-water before he goes to fight his enemy; Indian fight his enemy, take his scalp, and then drink fire-water."

"So Lawless drank more after I left, did he?" I asked.

"Much! much!" said Osseo with great emphasis, and he raised his hand to his lips five or six times. "But white man again big fool; if young Indian wishes to prove he is brave, he does not attack the greatest warrior he can find. No, Manito has given him too much wisdom; he fights another young brave and passes the chiefs by until he is a great warrior himself. White

man be as wise as Indian some day, and get what you call civilization."

He smiled at me in a quite superior way.

"I am sorry that I can't fight Boy-of-big-words," he resumed. "His scalp look well hanging here. Will not Lee give me the chance?"

He fingered his belt meditatively, as if Lawless's long auburn locks were already swinging there. But I knew that it was only a jest, as Osseo had long since given up the practice of scalping.

The news that a duel was to be fought caused a stir in the settlement the next morning. Everybody seemed to know it, except the commander-in-chief and his higher officers. I believed that the affair was likely to hurt me greatly in General Wayne's esteem, and would appear almost as a breach of faith, but I had no choice save to meet Lawless; stern methods were now needed.

I kept as closely to my cabin as possible that morning in order to avoid trouble, and shortly before noon, when I was alone, Osseo having gone to the camp, there came a light knock on the door. I called, "Enter!" and Rose Carew stepped over the threshold.

She gave me no time for surprise or inquiry, but exclaimed at once:

"You are to fight a duel, Captain Lee?"

I noticed that her face was flushed and her eyes glittering, showing excitement. But I bowed in answer to her question.

"You fight with Lieutenant Lawless?"

Again I bowed.

"I ask you not to fight this duel. You have done much for me; will you not do this also?"

I was surprised at her deep interest, her evident apprehension, and I sought a reason for it. Could it be that she cared for that red-haired chucklehead? He seemed a poor choice for such a woman, and yet I knew that the most brilliant women often choose the

most ridiculous men with whom to fall in love. I looked straight into her eyes, but she did not notice my gaze, standing there, nervous and eager, awaiting my answer. Then it was true, she did care for Lawless. I had felt the most profound contempt for him, but now I honoured him with my hate.

"I can not make you the promise you wish, Miss Carew," I said, shaking my head. "My position here would be untenable if I did not meet Lieutenant Lawless."

"That is true," she said with sudden comprehension, and then she looked down and wrinkled her eyebrows as if in thought. When she looked up again her expression had changed entirely, as only a woman's can in so brief a time. She gave me a most intoxicating smile, and I, though knowing well that she was smoothing the way to ask something else, and though calling her under my breath the boldest of little deceivers, smiled back. I was angry at her while I smiled.

"Now you are yourself, the brave hunter who saved me, the best-natured man in the world," she said with a little laugh.

"But I am not good-tempered at all," I protested. "On the contrary, I am morose and obstinate."

"Oh, no, you are not; you may give yourself a bad name, but others refuse to accept it. You can not hide behind such a false reputation in order to refuse me what I ask."

She smiled upon me again, and so bewilderingly that I felt myself without the heart to refuse her. I was a fool, although knowing it.

"If you fight with Lieutenant Lawless you will not kill him. Will you not make me such a promise?" she asked.

Now, it had never been my intent to slay Lawless, but when she asked me that question I felt a sudden desire to run my sword through him. A woman must

be blind indeed, or excessively brilliant, to love such a man. But I would make her show her feelings more plainly.

"You wish very much that I should spare him?" I said.

"I do indeed."

"Then his life is most dear to you?"

Her eyes met mine firmly.

"Do you think you have the right to ask me such a question, Captain Lee?" she said.

I was somewhat confused, but I replied:

"Ah, well, it seemed to me that you should not have a monopoly of asking."

She laughed.

"Your point is fairly made," she said, "but you will promise, will you not, Captain Lee, to let Lieutenant Lawless escape with his life?"

"It has never been my intent to take his life," I replied, not willing for her to think that I had yielded to her intercession alone.

"Then you do give me the promise!" she cried, ignoring my meaning, and she looked so joyful that my heart smote me for the feeling of hatred that I bore toward Lawless. I was about to say more, but she hurried from the house.

I watched her light figure descending the hill, and then I reflected seriously on our conversation. My blood was cool now, and I became convinced that she could not really care for Lawless in the way I had feared. It must be Jasper, wishing to save his tool, who had sent her. He was the man, and my belief did not improve my feeling toward him.

CHAPTER XXXI

A RED ACTOR

A YOUNG officer named Myers came to me in the afternoon, saying that he was Lawless's second, and would arrange the terms of the duel with any one whom I chose. I had expected Jasper to act for Lawless, but second thought showed me that he would avoid it. So I named as my second Winchester, who accepted at once. I offered to fight Lawless with swords, since every one knew my vast superiority over him with the rifle or pistol, and I saw the look of relief on Myers's face when I named the weapons, although Lawless himself had felt my swordsmanship. I left the rest of the matter in the hands of Winchester, promising to abide by all his decisions, and after a conference they told me that we could not meet for two or three days, as all of us would not be off duty at the same time until then. So the matter of the date was left open for the present, and, to tell the truth, it was almost driven out of my mind by a piece of news that Osseo brought me an hour later. Our Government was engaged, after St. Clair's defeat, in several futile and, I think, rather shameful efforts to treat with the savages; but then the Government was light in resources and heavy in responsibilities, and there was some excuse. Now an answer to one of our missions was coming, and Hoyoquim was the chief bearer of it, so Osseo said.

I felt a thrill at the idea of looking into the eyes of my old enemy in such a manner, and I was stirred,

too, by Osseo's report that Mechecunnaqua was no longer the head chief of the allied tribes. He had been shorn of much power by his enemies. This was good news for General Wayne's expedition, as Little Turtle was a great general, by far the ablest among the savages, but I felt a sense of personal regret, too, at his deposition, as I had received nothing but kindness from him.

The embassy from the savages, composed of five men holding the rank of chief, arrived that afternoon. There is no human being more dignified than the Indian when he comes under the flag of truce on a mission to his enemy, and Hoyoquim and his comrades of a certainty bore themselves as if the world and its whole fruitage were theirs. All the tribes were mightily puffed up over their victory at the Wabash, perhaps not unjustly, and the efforts of our Government to treat with them but seemed to increase this swollen pride, an inevitable result which a President and Congress many hundreds of miles from the border could not see. I was curious to know what reception Jasper would give to Hoyoquim, and I noticed that he kept to his quarters with singular pertinacity. I chanced to be near him when he first heard of Hoyoquim's coming, and his lips became like ashes. That was the only sign; he held his countenance otherwise, and doubtless it was noticed by none else, yet afterward he invented excuses, some of them very feeble, to remain in his tent.

I was present with General Wayne when he received the delegates with all the formality and courtesy due upon such occasions. Hoyoquim and his comrades were arrayed in the extreme of Indian splendour, gay head-dresses, red or blue blankets, hunting shirts, leggings and moccasins of bright-coloured buckskin, adorned with many-coloured beads, and their bearing was both haughty and condescending. It was evident to those who knew the ways of the savage that they came not to treat with an equal, but to announce their terms to

an inferior. It made my blood hot to see them assume such an air, although I knew that we had given them good excuse for it. Hoyoquim was the spokesman of his party, and after he and General Wayne had smoked the pipe of peace and exchanged the usual compliments he turned to me, extending his hand.

"It is my brother Lee," he said. "I offer him my hand in the white man's fashion."

"And I take it as it is meant, Black Eagle," I replied. "You are a fair and open foe, which I can not say of some white enemies whom I have."

His eyes flashed an inquiry, but I gave no explanation. I half suspected that he guessed the man whom I meant most of all. When I was escorting him a little later to a tent set aside for him he saw Rose Carew. It was only a sudden glimpse. She was walking some distance away with Mrs. Winchester, but not all the bronze of his skin and gaudy paint could hide the gleam of savage delight and anticipation that swept over his face. I knew Hoyoquim's intent and his ruthless tenacity, and with a momentary faintness at the heart I recognised the danger of Rose Carew, which she herself would not see. But Hoyoquim uttered no word until we reached the tent. Then, when he and I were alone, he said:

"Lee, the white maid who was once my prisoner is again with the army of the Long Knives. 'Tis Manito who brings her back that she may sit in the lodge of Hoyoquim and call him her warrior."

"Not so, Hoyoquim," I replied. "You are cunning and swift and strong, but it is not the will of God that she shall ever sit in your lodge."

He gazed at me without resentment.

"You love the white maid," he said, "and so does the other Long Knife whose name, too, is Lee, the false dog whom we shall yet burn at the stake, but I will take her."

He spoke with the most absolute confidence, and I shuddered at the possible fate of Rose Carew. There was nothing that I could do, save to watch over her with redoubled vigilance, and trust to Osseo for the rest.

General Wayne entertained the delegates on the evening of the second day at his quarters, seeking perhaps to impress them with a view of white civilization and its power. All the chief officers in their best dress attended, and the ladies came too, drawn partly by curiosity and partly because any kind of diversion was rare in a frontier town. There was a dinner, some dancing, and a little playing by the ladies upon the harpsichord and spinet to the accompaniment of their voices. Jasper was present—I had seen to that myself, with a little suggestion to the general that, as Jasper had been among the Indians, he might be able to assist with advice; I am not unwilling to confess to some malicious pleasure in the suggestion. I also managed it in such manner that Hoyoquim and Jasper met suddenly and almost face to face, and this time Jasper was so little master of himself that he became deathly pale, and for a moment or two was in a nervous tremble. But Hoyoquim was content with a veiled threat.

"Your skin is white again," he said to Jasper, "and it is well, for now I know you best."

Rose Carew's manner at the sight of the chief was wholly different. She seemed to have no fear of him—or is there a quality in woman which prevents her from dreading any man whom she knows to admire her?

"He is in truth a striking type of the savage race," she said to me, I chancing to be near her at that moment.

"Ay, of a race that has brought much woe to the white women of this country," I replied. There was wrath then in my heart against Hoyoquim, and a little, too, for her, because she would not see how greatly she ought to fear him, and instead wasted upon him

words of admiration, though I think, in truth, that she spoke in all innocence.

Osseo too came presently, and he had not been less sparing of adornment than Hoyoquim. My Indian comrade had the vanity of dress and that love of colour which is an instinct with the primitive races. To-night he glittered in reds and blues, and the beads upon his garments flashed in a dozen tints under the flare of the candles. He was, as I have often said before, a magnificent specimen of his race in physical development as well as mental endowments, and he and Hoyoquim made a striking pair. But they could be coupled in name only, as I was conscious at once of a deep animosity between the two. They exchanged only a single glance, but it was so full of hate that I was startled. I wondered at the cause of their enmity, but I was not sorry for it, as such an ardent foe might thwart any attempt by Hoyoquim.

When Rose Carew played the harpsichord and all of us gave our applause, I saw again that look of complacent triumph on the face of Hoyoquim, and I longed to have him before my rifle in the forest.

The formal courtesy with which the chiefs had been received reigned throughout the evening. General Wayne and his staff, acting upon the advice that had been given them, never abated a jot from their dignity, nor did the savages. They drank wine which was presented to them with great gravity, not smacking their lips nor giving any other expression of content. But I thought a little later that I saw Hoyoquim's eyes sparkling, and I believed that, despite his will, the wine had crept into his blood—savages yield much more readily than we to the influence of liquors. Osseo, with superior judgment, touched no wine, and even the youngest and handsomest of the women—my comrade was never insensible to beauty—could not induce him to do so. "White man's medicine red man's poison," he said briefly

to Rose Carew, though with no intent of impoliteness. I repeat that Osseo had a keen eye for beauty, and he proved it by devoting himself with all a red dandy's gallantry to Miss Carew. When next he had a chance to speak to me unheard by others, he said with that faint, almost invisible smile of his:

"Lee should not get jealous and blame me. I can not help it. The white maiden is a sun, and she dazzles me."

"It is not I whom you have to fear, Mr. Son-of-the-evening-star," I replied, meeting him in the proper spirit, "but the Wyandot chief and the Long Knife whose name is the same as mine."

"Let them meet me in the wilderness," he said with a sudden flash in the eye, and now I knew that he was not indulging in easy trifling. "I pray Manito that the day may come quickly."

Thus proceeded this singular entertainment, in which the most primitive and the most advanced of our country met on an equal footing, and I saw more than once the mounting fire in Hoyoquim's eyes. I believed that his surroundings and the wine together were having some influence upon the Wyandot chief, and I watched him with eager curiosity. Presently one of the ladies hovering about him—he seemed to have for them the fascination of the snake for the bird—asked him to illustrate some custom of his race, following the lead of the whites who had sung or played. Hoyoquim was not loath, and while his eyes sparkled he replied:

"It shall be as you wish; our ways are not your ways, and Manito alone knows which are better."

But it was obvious enough from Hoyoquim's tone which he considered better. He spoke to his comrades, the centre of the room was left clear, and while they chanted in low, monotonous tones he danced the scalp dance, throwing the blue cloak from his shoulders and drawing from his girdle the tomahawk, through the

horn handle of which he and I had once smoked the temporary pipe of peace. The subordinate chiefs never took their eyes from the face of Hoyoquim, bending upon him a look most intense and vivid, while he in turn, with the same concentration of vision, followed imaginary foes.

The scalp dance varies according to the tribe, and sometimes acording to the taste of the dancer. Hoyoquim gave to his all the tricks and adornments of his savage fancy, expressing ferocity, anticipation, triumph, and every other warlike emotion of his savage nature. His shoulders and arms were bare, and all the great, brown muscles stood out upon them as he bent and gyrated. It was no secret to me that Hoyoquim was not seeking to conceal his primitive ferocity. In the disguise of the dance, and with the maddening chant of his comrades in his ears, he let it all come forth. I knew full well, as he flourished the tomahawk, that he was looking forward to the day when he could swing it in deadly earnest over the same heads—this was but the foretaste—and Osseo, standing like a statue against the wall, knew it too.

The lady whose suggestion had been the cause of the dance repented soon of her too fertile mind, and shrank back with a cry of fright when Hoyoquim swung the tomahawk before her face. The others only laughed, liking the jest, as they called it, and applauded Hoyoquim.

The chant of the Indians ceased presently, and Hoyoquim, stopping his dance, stood erect and motionless, and began to speak, also in the monotonous tone that the Indians like.

"Listen, my white brethren," he said, "and you shall hear a story of a great chief and a white man. The chief lived far in the wilderness, and Manito loved him, for he made him straight and strong and great in war and the chase. The chief took in battle a white maiden

who was as fair as the rose, and whom he coveted for his lodge. His comrades took a white officer, a Long Knife like yourselves, and the Indians carried the white maiden and then the Long Knife to their village."

Hoyoquim's blazing eyes were fixed upon the face of Jasper, who was white to the brow. Osseo moved not, but both he and I knew well the tale that Hoyoquim would tell. The chief spoke with all the expressive gesture and mimicry of the Indian, his face now and then becoming so ferocious that the women shrank back afraid. But Rose Carew followed him with strained eyes and a dawning comprehension.

"The captured Long Knife," said Hoyoquim, "loved his life and he feared the torture post. He did not wish to die like a brave warrior amid the flames, laughing at his enemies; the forest and the sky were sweet to him, and he prayed to his gods not to take him away. They heard his prayer, and told him to be no longer a Long Knife, but to become a red warrior, and he heeded. He was adopted into the tribes, and he became a brother of the chief. He put on the blanket and wore the scalp lock, and there was a tomahawk at his girdle. But his heart was false. It was blacker than the black mud of the swamp, and as foul."

Hoyoquim paused again, and swept the circle with fiery eyes. Jasper tried to shrink back, but there was Winchester just behind him, and the muscular form of the Englishman would not yield.

"The great chief," resumed Hoyoquim, "would take to his lodge the white maiden whom he had captured, the prize of his skill and courage, but there were other chiefs who hated him, and they said that he must wait. The Long Knife looked upon her and he coveted her too, but another Long Knife, whose skin, like his heart, is always white, that both his friends and his enemies may ever know what he is, came and gave himself for her that she might return to her own people;

and the Long Knife with the black heart, breaking his oaths before Manito, slipped from the red men and went back to the whites, telling them many lies."

Hoyoquim paused for the third time, and then, as if he were a medicine man who could learn the secrets of the future from Manito, began to prophesy.

"But the great chief only waits," he said in his chanting voice, "for Manito has given to the red warriors both the patient heart and the strong arm. He sees from afar the white maiden who was stolen from him, and he watches her. She is yet his, and he will claim her again, taking her to his lodge, from which none can rescue her; and he watches, too, the Long Knife of the black heart, whom he hates for his broken oaths, and for whom he sharpens his tomahawk every day. When the time comes he will drive his tomahawk through the traitor's skull, thus!"

He sprang forward, swept the tomahawk in a glittering circle over Jasper's head, and then whirled it aloft. All the women shrieked, and Jasper stood as if paralyzed, powerless to move. But Hoyoquim, with a low laugh, let the tomahawk fall, unstained, to his side, saying, "A great chief will deal as is fitting with both his loves and his hates." Then he stepped from the circle, and throwing his gaudy blanket again over his shoulders, resumed his phlegmatic calm. When I looked at Jasper a few moments later his face was covered with great beads of sweat, while Rose Carew was shrinking back as if frightened.

"'Twas a fine bit of acting, Black Eagle," said General Wayne, "though perhaps savouring somewhat too much of the real to soothe the nerves of the ladies, but we thank you."

Whether he knew the meaning of Hoyoquim's words I could not tell from his manner, but the reception ended presently, and we went home.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE DEMAND OF THE TRIBES

It was not in reason that Hoyoquim's most real acting should not create talk, but no opportunity was permitted me to hear it the next morning, as at rise of sun there came a message for me to attend at once at General Wayne's quarters. Again was I sensible of the great kindness with which he treated me, and the manner in which he upheld with his power an outcast like myself. He received me in his usual sincere manner.

"I have sent for you, Jack," he said, "because you know the ways of the savages, who are on the whole strange stuff to me. It was the wish of the Government that I first seek to treat with them before trying the edge of the sword. But I lack faith in the softer measures. It seems to me, Jack, that the bearing of these Indians since they have come among us is that of masters toward slaves, and it goes sorely against the grain of me to dance to the crack of a blanketed savage's whip. What thinkest thou of it, Jack?"

"General Wayne," I replied, "when the Niagara shall have drawn all the water from the Great Lakes, then will it be wise to be humble to the Indian."

"'Tis my way of thinking, Jack, but the President is a man of peace, and the arm of the Government is not long—but it may grow, Jack—and we must even try what soft words will do, though 'tis wise at the same time to have the sword unsheathed. The Black Eagle

and his comrades will be here with their demands within two hours, and I wish you to keep at my elbow, Jack, and advise me what they mean. They deal so much in the sun and the moon and the stars and metaphors and allegories that they quite befog my brain, and I would know what they say."

I laughed a little at the general's vexation, although I knew that it came from good cause, and promised to be at hand for reference. In truth, I felt pleased at his trust, and would have been the most ungrateful of dogs not to have served him to the utmost. Major Carew, my friend Captain Hardy, and several others arrived presently, and at the appointed time the delegates from the allied tribes, in all their brave raiment, stalked into the general's quarters. Then the usual interchange of courtesies and formalities followed. Both sides smoked the pipe of peace, talked for awhile of matters far from that in hand, and then through devious courses approached the true one. Hoyoquim's bearing was haughty in the extreme, and it was apparent to one like myself, who knew the Indian nature, that the demands of the tribes would not be light.

General Wayne, as I saw very well, was thoroughly angry, but though he had the reputation—often a true one—of being a hot-blooded man, he held a fine rein over his temper on this occasion, and deflected not a hair's breadth from the formal politeness with which he had received the delegates.

"And now," he said at last to the chiefs, "I wish to tell to you the words of our Great Father in Philadelphia. His heart is full of grief because of the wars between the white man and his red brother. He hears of the brave men who have fallen on either side and the captives taken, but he would put an end to it all, and have the two nations smoke a pipe of peace that will last forever."

"It shall be as the Great Father in Philadelphia

wishes," said Hoyoquim gravely, "if he will listen to the words of wisdom, and give to the tribes of the red men that which is theirs. What these are I, Hoyoquim, called in your language the Black Eagle, have been chosen by my brethren to tell."

"What are these demands?" asked General Wayne. "Let the Black Eagle whose words are wisdom tell them and the white men will listen."

"In the beginning," replied Hoyoquim, "the red man owned all the land. The woods and the waters and what were in them were his. Then the white man came, and he was poor and sick, and he begged for a little land, only enough for him to build a cabin on, and the red man gave it to him. Then the white man grew strong, and more came with swords and rifles and great guns on wheels, and then they took all the land from the red man and drove him over the mountains. Now they cross the mountains and seek to take more land, that they may cut down the forests and drive away the game. But the Indians, who before fought among themselves, now fight together against the white man, and he can not stand before them. They have destroyed the army of the General-who-never-walks as they will destroy that of the Black Snake if he comes."

"Your demands, Black Eagle?" said General Wayne patiently.

"My brethren of the allied tribes," continued Hoyoquim in the same haughty tone, "have had a great talk, and they have chosen that I and those who come with me should tell to you their message. They bid you and all the white men to go back beyond the mountains, give up all the land of Kain-tuck-ee, and all the land on this side of the Ohio, the tribes to keep all the captives that they have taken in battle; when this is done there will be peace between your nation and mine."

I saw General Wayne's eyes flash at this preposter-

ous demand, but again he was master of himself, and replied in even tones:

"You have given to me the message of the chiefs, Black Eagle, and now do you take mine to them. Tell them that the Great Father in Philadelphia is patient and loves his red children. But when madness like a fever creeps into their veins he must punish them. You have chosen to dig up the war hatchet, and he says that it is well. He has sent me with many soldiers to punish you, and I shall come and burn down your villages and slay your warriors, and the tribes will become as weak as a starving wolf!"

"The General-who-never-walks came with many soldiers," replied Hoyoquim, "and where are they? Their women and children will never see them again. Their bones lie rotting in the woods, and their scalps hang in the Indian wigwams."

"It is true," replied General Wayne, "but I come with men who know the Indian ways, men who never sleep, men who see the Indian trail in the forest, though he pass as lightly as the deer, and even as you served the army of General St. Clair so we shall serve you."

"Be it so," replied Hoyoquim, and his whole manner expressed nothing but defiance. "Let the white general come, and, however soon, it will not be too soon for the Indian. You have chosen war, and our hearts are glad."

He plucked the tomahawk from his belt, and with a mighty stroke buried it deep in the wood of the wall. Then his four brethren did likewise.

I knew the Indians' ways, and taking from General Wayne's hand the pipe of peace that he had been smoking, smashed it in pieces on the floor. The general took his cue at once.

"It is war," he said, "and thus have we destroyed the pipe of peace. Go home to the old chiefs and tell them that I shall come with an army!"

Hoyoquim and his comrades said no more, but, drawing their tomahawks from the wall, strode haughtily from the room. An hour later they were again in the forest on the way to their villages in the north.

As I left the general's quarters I met old Joe Grimes.

"What have they been saying in there, John?" he asked.

"Not many words, but they had meaning, Joe," I replied.

"The chiefs are mighty stuck up," he said. "I don't have no use for an Indian any time, barrin' Osseo and one or two others, an' I can't abide 'em at all now. If I had my way I'd fight 'em to the end. What did they ask?"

"That we give up Kentucky and all the Northwestern Territory, leave to them all the captives that they have taken from us, and go back east of the mountains."

Old Joe's face became as red as the rush of blood could make it, and he uttered a series of rapid and unintelligible oaths.

"And the general—what did he say?" he exclaimed at last.

"Of course we agreed," I replied. "Next week we begin our march to the eastward; all the settlers go with us."

Then the volcano burst. Old Joe despised soldiers; he believed them of little use, and now he consigned them to more warm places than are contained in all the theologies that I ever heard of. But in the midst of a fiery outbreak he saw my face.

"John Lee," he said indignantly, "you've been stuffin' mush in my ears."

"Of course I have, Joe," I replied. "What do you take General Wayne for? Don't you know that he's the kind of man who makes peace at the edge of the sword? He's sent those chiefs back to the tribes with a message

that he's coming at the head of an army, and they'll have to fight."

Then old Joe did a dance of delight, and swore that General Wayne was one of the few soldiers who knew anything about fighting Indians, and he, Joe Grimes, would prove it anywhere and to anybody. There was neither sentiment nor poetry in Joe's nature, and, like so many other of the rugged borderers, he believed that the best way to settle the Indian question was to kill all the Indians, and truly, whenever a new tale of their atrocities came in, it seemed that he was right.

An hour later I was in General Wayne's quarters again, called to him by a new message. He had dismissed his staff, and though he smiled, it was sourly. It was apparent enough that the blood was hot in his veins. When I entered he burst out, though not against me.

"By my soul, Jack!" he cried, "I have never before had such a struggle against myself. I, a man of hot temper, called upon to hold my tongue in the face of such insolence! Why, I could have seized that red savage, Black Eagle or Hoyoquim, by the throat! He tried to dictate as if I were in the dust with his foot on my neck."

"He is a cunning Indian," I said, "and a dangerous foe, but not so able as Little Turtle, who beat St. Clair."

"Whatever he and his comrades are," he said emphatically, "we march against 'em as soon as possible, and I pray to God that we beat 'em. Jack, do you know that I tremble sometimes at the responsibility. In the war with the British we were fighting a civilized foe, and if we failed we did not expect to see our women outraged and our children brained as we do here. They beat Harmar and St. Clair, and if they beat us too, God knows what will happen, for I fear much that the Government can do no more. You don't know, Jack, how glad I am to have with me a comrade like you who understands this wilderness, and whom I can trust. It is

enough to make an iron man weep when these tales of outrage come in, and if we are beaten again I hope, Jack, that I shall not be spared to tell it; and I love life, too."

"General," I said, "you must beware of an ambush. That is the thing which the soldier who goes against the savages should never forget. They can not stand before us in the open, but when they fight the white man in the forest they will beat him unless he has learned their ways."

"Just what the President himself said, and as he was present at Braddock's great slaughter he ought to know."

Then he began to tell me his plans, and to ask about the country and where I thought the savages would meet him. These were points on which I could in truth be of service to him, and I drew some rude maps for his use; but above all I repeated my cautions as to the nature of Indian attacks. When you know the savage and his rules of warfare, which are wholly different from ours, you are much better fitted to advance against him. At the end of a half hour I said:

"General, you have done much for me, now will you add to my gratitude by granting one little request?"

"What is it?"

"Forbid Miss Carew to go with the army to Fort Greeneville."

He looked at me in some surprise and then asked why.

"You heard the story of Hoyoquim," I replied, "and you know well that it was Miss Carew whom he meant."

"And I know, too, that the man whom he called a traitor was your cousin Jasper. I would that I had the proof; then I could at least send him back to the East; now I must keep him, though he shall have no responsibility—you know well, Jack, that a general can not

always choose his own officers, and his influence was too much for me. But Miss Carew has my promise to go to Fort Greeneville, and I can not withdraw it. She is very anxious to go—perhaps she has reasons which seem good to her—a woman's reasons are not always a man's reasons, you know. Don't ask me to break my word, Jack; I can not do it."

I knew the uselessness of pursuing the quest further in that quarter, but when I left General Wayne I went straight in search of Rose Carew, and was fortunate enough to find her alone as before.

"I trust, Miss Carew," I said, without preliminaries, "that you listened well to the tale Hoyoquim told last night."

"I did, and it was an interesting story," she said defiantly.

"You know that the white girl of whom he spoke was you, and the white man whom he called a traitor Jasper Lee?"

"And if so, what then?" with increasing defiance.

"You heard his threats and how direct they were; you know what a dangerous savage he is, and what your fate will be if you fall into his hands. I beg you again not to go with the army. If you do not think of yourself, think of others who would rather die than hear of you in the power of the savage chief."

"Who, for instance?" Her eyes were sparkling, and she gazed at me with an intentness that made my own eyes waver. But I did not flinch in spirit and I answered her proudly, for I was not ashamed of the love I bore her:

"Myself!"

A deep blush suffused her countenance, but whether of anger I could not tell with my half-averted gaze. But when she replied it seemed to me that there was some softness in her speech.

"I must go," she said; "I think that I shall be safe with General Wayne's army—he is not a St. Clair—and, moreover, I wish to be with my father when he is about to incur great danger. There are, too, other reasons——"

Here she hesitated, and my jealous heart, so ready to make Lawless her choice, now shifted to Jasper. She wished to watch over him and to save him from the particular wrath of the savages. Feminine influence even in the strictest of camps might be great.

"A woman must have her way even though she pay for it," I said, the anger that rose in my veins making me forget my manners.

But she did not fling back at me as I expected.

"I owe you a great debt, Captain Lee," she said, "and I would pay it if I could, but do not speak harshly to me now. I pray that you do not. I must go to Fort Greeneville. I have reasons that you yourself would call the best in the world if you knew them, but I can not tell them to you."

I was ever discovering some new phase of her character, beholding some mood or passing fancy of which I had not dreamed—perhaps that was why she attracted me so much—and now she chose suddenly to appear as the most bewitching of supplicants, and to me. There was the suspicion of a pout in the curve of her lips, as if she feared that I would speak harshly to her, when God knows that I was not in a position to deal roughly with anybody, least of all with Rose Carew.

"We are good friends, are we not?" she said, joining her hands, still in a beseeching attitude, but a smile illumining her face like the rosy dawn driving away the night; "we are even partners in a way, as we fled through the wilderness together, and it is not an unhappy memory. You won't refuse me my request, will you? You promised, you know, to spare Lieutenant Lawless, and you will do this, too, won't you?"

A soft heart is the curse of man, and woman, knowing it, wheedles him; and man, knowing that she is wheedling him, lets her. I plead no immunity. I claim to be no exception, and I said no further word against that which seemed to be her heart's desire, though my anger toward Jasper grew.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A GREAT TRUST

THE general pushed the preparations for our march, and there were a few days so crowded with the details of work that my duel with Lawless was perforce compelled to linger. I met the lieutenant two or three times in the interval, and I speak truth when I say that I pitied him. The heat of wine was gone from his head, and he saw the affair that he had forced upon me in all its cruel reality. My skill with firearms—and I mention it here not to boast, but to explain the case—was known to all the frontier posts; indeed, I had given an exhibition of it in Cincinnati, as you know; and a half-dozen of the old Revolutionary officers now with Wayne's army were spinning marvellous tales of the way I used to handle the sword in the old days. They would say, as I heard from Winchester, that I might have lost a little of my skill through lack of practice, but it could not make much difference, and then some one would take the report to Lawless.

How much the youth suffered in those days it is impossible for me to estimate, but I think that he never forgot it. Jasper, who had drawn him into the trouble, gave no sign, confining himself to his military duties, and abandoning for the time his plan to make me trouble. In truth, Hoyoquim had given him much to think about, and I heard that he was making further efforts to escape the march into the wilderness, but without success.

The duel was arranged at last, and late of a bright afternoon we met in a fine open space on the Kentucky shore near the confluence of the Licking and the Ohio, swords being the weapons. Winchester was my second, and Myers acted for Lawless. Lawless was quite pale, but on the whole his bearing was creditable to him—I was sure that he had prepared himself for death. There were four or five spectators, including Jasper and Captain Hardy, and they stood in a group, talking in low voices and waiting for us to begin. I was somewhat apart, and Jasper, approaching me, said in a tone that could not be heard by the others:

"John, if you kill this boy it will be murder."

"Quite true," I replied, "but it is you, not I, who will be the murderer."

He was silent, and I added:

"I know well, Jasper, that he was egged on to this by you. It was part of your plan to make the camp so hot for me that I must leave it, but I propose to show that those who do not respect me shall at least fear to pick a quarrel with me."

He turned on his heel and joined the group of spectators. Winchester produced the swords, a fine pair of weapons, with edges like razors, and he ran his fingers along the shining blades in a manner most appreciative.

"You shall not be able to say that you lacked the use of a good weapon for your maiden duel, lieutenant," he said to Lawless with a smile.

The boy's lips quivered, but he did not answer. In truth, the world about him, if he chose to look at it, seemed fair. The surface of the two rivers shone in alternate play of silver and gold as the sunlight fell upon the water. Hills and valleys were clothed in forest green, and the air was balmy. One would not wish to leave it all.

The seconds handed us our swords, and we stood on guard. Now, in my youth I had learned the use of

the weapon from three masters—an Englishman, a Frenchman, and a Prussian—to which was joined a natural aptitude; so I knew the tricks of all the schools, and I waited, looking straight into Lawless's eyes. He lifted his sword and thrust at me, but I caught his blade on mine, gave a quick and powerful turn of my wrist, and his weapon fell on the turf a dozen feet away. He became paler than ever, and his lips quivered again. But the boy was brave. He stood erect and motionless and said:

"It is my chief regret to die at the hand of a traitor."

"Lieutenant Lawless," I said, "when you are older you will learn manners as well as knowledge of the sword. Until then good-day."

I bowed to him, replaced my sword in its scabbard, and hooking my arm in my friend's said:

"Come, Winchester, we will cross to the other side of the Ohio; my work awaits me there."

We bowed politely to all the officers, and proceeded toward the river. As we approached our skiff I heard the sound of hasty footsteps behind me, and turning, beheld the flushed face of Lawless.

"Captain Lee," he cried, "I hope you don't think I'm ungrateful. I value my life, and I take it from you with thanks. Besides, you are a braver man morally than I am, and what they say about you must be a lie! Will you shake my hand?"

Our hands met in a hearty grip. We have been the best of friends to this day.

The affair never came to the ears of General Wayne, or if it did he said naught upon the matter. It grieved me much to go against his orders on the subject of duelling, in particular since I owed him such a great debt, but I felt the necessity of making an example. Those who are of doubtful character must speak with great emphasis if they would be believed. I may add also

that a slanderer grows cautious in the presence of a sharp sword, and I noticed after the duel that the air about me had become perceptibly more pleasant. Winchester said that the number of my defenders showed a sudden increase.

On the morning following the duel I met Rose Carew.

"I have fought with Lieutenant Lawless," I said.

"You spared him?" she asked.

"He called me a traitor on the duelling ground in the presence of all the others," I replied.

"Did you kill him?" she exclaimed, and there was a sudden flash in her eyes.

"I promised you that I would not do so," I replied.

"And of course you kept your word, because you are a man of honour," she said. But the expression had gone from her face, and she seemed cold and indifferent.

"I kept it," I replied, "and Lieutenant Lawless has since withdrawn his words. We are friends now."

"It was well of him," she said.

We departed four days later for Fort Greeneville, about fifteen hundred strong, carrying with us several cannon, much baggage, many camp followers, and about twenty ladies, mostly officers' wives, though there were two or three exceptions, like Rose Carew, who seemed to have forgotten the danger, and who was full of interest in the wilderness.

We had scarce left out of sight the log houses of Cincinnati before we saw on every side of us the Indian sign.

"The warriors expect to make another great slaughter," said Osseo, "and they will wait until we are far in the woods."

"But 'tis not the General-who-never-walks who commands us now," I said.

"No," replied Osseo, casting an approving eye upon

the well-drilled troops, "and it is not the same army that follows. Manito does not will that the same thing shall be done twice in the same way."

But the Indian portent was invisible to the majority of the soldiers; they saw only the deep-green foliage, now in all the royal flush of early summer, and the birds of brilliant hue that chattered and sang around them; they admired the brooks of clear water sparkling over the pebbles, and the gigantic oaks and hickories that grew so thickly in the forest. It was a beautiful land—a land of temperate climate and deep, rich soil, for which opposing races might well fight. The wilderness showed only its peaceful and beautiful side to them, and the new explorers could scarce believe that dangers lay hidden in it.

"It is so interesting and yet so strange," said Mrs. Winchester to me, "and how unlike England!"

"They have been building houses and making roads there for two thousand years, and they haven't begun here," I replied.

"And do you really tell me that there are hostile Indians all around us?" she asked, a look of incredulity on her blonde countenance.

"I told you so, and I repeat it," I replied. "There hovers about us continually a foe more dangerous, so far as forest fighting is concerned, than any other in the world."

"How do you know this?"

"The leaves tell it, the turf tells it, and the birds sing it."

"The birds sing it? You are becoming poetical, Mr. Lee."

"Not at all; I am speaking most commonplace prose when I say that the birds sing it; they usually sing it about nightfall, and it is not the song of a bird at all, but the imitation of it—Indian signalling to Indian."

"Then the voice of the wilderness is not always a voice to be trusted?"

"It is full of treachery."

"I can scarce believe it; it looks so beautiful!"

I could see the beauty as well as she, but I saw, too, what a lure it was. This same beauty had drawn many thousands of the ignorant to torture and death. The wilderness is only for those who know it.

Old Joe Grimes beheld but the other side. The beauty and the peace were nothing to him. Old Joe may have had the spirit of the picturesque and the romantic concealed somewhere in his soul, but "concealed" was certainly the word.

"'Tis well that our general has some brains in his head," he said, "though where on earth a soldier got 'em I don't know. The forest is full of savages, John, an' they are countin' our scalps already."

"Let 'em count," I said, "if they find any pleasure in it; but I tell you, Joe Grimes, Mad Anthony Wayne knows the work that he has to do."

But Joe shook his head doubtfully and would not be consoled.

Nevertheless, we reached Fort Recovery, built on St. Clair's battlefield, a good log stronghold, without incident save the loss of three or four stragglers, the fate of whom was concealed from the ladies. The latter rejoiced greatly over the safe journey, and maintained that we had exaggerated the dangers. But I was glad to notice how thick and solid were the walls of Fort Recovery, and I was quite able to endure the taunts they levelled at me as a prophet of disaster proved false.

"Where are your savages?" said Mrs. Winchester to me. "Still hidden in the woods?"

"Still hidden in the woods," I replied, "and none the less dangerous because of it."

Rose Carew was not so incredulous. She needed no

proof now that the wilderness was full of snares, yet she seemed to fear none.

The stay of the main column at Fort Recovery was but brief. Two nights after our arrival General Wayne called me to his cabin, where I found him alone and thoughtful.

"Sit down, Jack," he said, "I have much to tell you, lad, and a great trust to confide to you, too."

I would have given my thanks for this new proof of faith, but he would not listen. "Tush, Jack! do not bore me with such words," he said; "I select you for the work that I am going to name because you are the most fit. My purpose is wholly selfish. I can not afford to fail in this campaign, and, as you know, the fate of every general is in the hands of his subordinates; therefore it behooves me to choose the best."

I was silent, while he waited, deep in reflection.

"You know that I must concentrate my men toward the Maumee," he resumed presently, "in order that we may strike there at the heart of the Indian power. Therefore I advance day after to-morrow with the main part of the army now here. But Fort Recovery is one of our most important way stations, and it must be held by an adequate garrison. You are soldier enough to know that a garrison needs a commander"—here he smiled—"and you are to be that commander. I promise you that you shall be released in time for the final campaign, but you are to be in charge at Fort Recovery until I send for you."

I was a hardened man, but tears rose in my eyes at this new and great proof of confidence, while at the same time I felt a sense of awkwardness.

"General," I said, "there will be officers here who are my seniors. They would rebel against this even under ordinary circumstances, but consider what I am."

"I have considered everything," he replied shortly, "and I don't make any request; I give an order. If

you do not obey it I shall have you locked up in your own guardhouse. Now go back to your quarters and begin to think about what you will have to do. I fancy that yours will be no easy task, but if you do not perform it, then I, as well as you, shall suffer from the disgrace, and I imagine that John Lee does not wish that."

In addition to his verbal dismissal he turned his back upon me and began to read some documents. Then I went to my quarters, overwhelmed and embarrassed, but feeling, too, a secret pride. Presently confidence also began to rise. I would show my critics, whatsoever they might be, that I knew how to command.

The knowledge that the commander-in-chief would advance again was general at the fort the next day, and when I met Rose Carew just inside the stockade wall she spoke to me about it.

"All the women are to be left here, so I hear," she said.

I answered in the affirmative.

"Why?"

"The general thinks they would be in the way," I replied, quite plainly. "It is certain they would be of no use in fighting the Indians."

"You have the merit of brusqueness sometimes, Mr. Lee," she said.

"'Tis often a merit," I replied.

"It depends upon the man," she said. "But do you know who is to be commander here in the absence of General Wayne?"

I fancy that she knew even when she asked, although I did not think so then.

"Yes," I replied, "the general has selected a man in whom he has the most implicit confidence."

"It is a difficult post."

"That is true, because in addition to the soldiers

there are at least a dozen women whom this man will have to reduce to obedience."

"And do you know this paragon?"

"I do. It is myself, John Lee, the man who stands before you."

She looked thoughtful.

"It is a long time since you have been a soldier—that is, a regular soldier," she said. "Don't you think the responsibilities are very heavy?"

I flushed at this expressed doubt of my ability.

"At any rate," I replied, "I shall see that my orders are obeyed."

"By all?"

"By all—men and women alike," and I looked straight into her eyes.

Her gaze fell, and the red in her cheeks deepened. I fancy that she was not often spoken to as I spoke to her then. Yet sternness with a woman is not always misplaced.

"You shall find me obedient," she said, as she walked toward the women's quarters, but before disappearing she turned and added, "if you are a reasonable commander."

I ascertained before the close of the day that Major Carew and Jasper would remain at the fort under my command, an embarrassing fact in its way, but not without a grim satisfaction for me. I resolved that both should obey me. But for the present, in order to avoid any awkward situation, I remained rather closely at my quarters. There, shortly after sundown, Major Carew came, and I knew at once what he would be about.

"I hear, Captain Lee, that you are to command here in the general's absence," he said.

"The report is correct."

"It is a great honour."

"Quite true, but no greater for me, I trust, than for anybody else."

I spoke coolly, determined that he should make his meaning plain. The only respect that I felt for him was due to the fact that he was Rose Carew's father—a circumstance that she could not help. He flushed a little, and spoke evasively. He did not mean to refer to anything unpleasant, he said—anything that ought to be forgotten—but there was already much comment among the officers who had to remain; there might be trouble, and perhaps if I were to speak to General Wayne he might change his mind. But I cut him short.

"General Wayne chose me for this place because I have had much experience in Indian warfare," I said with intentional brusqueness, "and to tell you the exact truth, I think that he has made a good choice. Let those officers who are murmuring be assured that I shall find means to enforce my authority. I shall have the power of life and death here."

He flushed again, this time a deeper red than before, and then hastened to make apologies; he disliked extremely to be the bearer of disagreeable messages, he said, but he was older than the others, and he thought that perhaps he might relieve an awkward situation.

"There is no awkward situation at all," I replied. "I shall be commander here and I will be obeyed."

Then he went out, and I was sure that his coming had been instigated by the crafty Jasper. I began now to take a joy in the situation. These fine gentlemen from the East should know that here in the woods I was their master.

Following Major Carew came a more welcome visitor. It was Osseo. He sat for a long time in silence. seemingly buried in meditation after his fashion. Then he said:

"Lee is to be the great chief here. My heart is glad. The Black Snake knows a wise warrior. He is a warrior himself."

"It is your partiality, Osseo," I replied. "We have long been good comrades, and therefore you credit me with more virtues than I possess."

"Not so," replied Osseo, the twinkle coming into his eyes. "Does Lee take Osseo for a white man who says one thing with his lips and has another in his heart? No, Osseo is a red man, and his tongue is not crooked; if he thought Lee was a fool he would call him a fool; since he is not a fool, but a wise man, Osseo calls him a wise man."

Thus he dismissed the subject in the most airy manner, and I knew that he was not speaking wholly in jest, although Osseo loved to tease me about the weak points of my race, and point out the many particulars in which, according to his view, the red man was our superior.

But the joy of old Joe Grimes was undisguised.

"I'm tarnation glad that no soldier is left to be big chief here," he said with his customary contempt of all organized authority.

"But I'm a soldier."

"You're not soldier enough to hurt," he replied, which did not sound like a compliment, although he meant it for one.

General Wayne left the next day, and I came into my command.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE DEFENCE OF A FORT

I INCREASED the guard of Fort Recovery as soon as General Wayne and his force disappeared in the forest, my fears of attack, which surpassed those of the commander-in-chief, inciting me to the utmost vigilance. He did not know the secret motives impelling Hoyoquim, whose power among the allied tribes was now greatly increased, and the renegade Blackstaffe would be driven on by the same impulse. I also sent forth Osseo, Joe Grimes, and other trusty scouts to beat up the woods for Indian signs.

I was just beyond the palisade, giving instructions to the last of the scouts, when Rose Carew came through the gate. I thought it well to show her at once that I was a commander who commanded.

"No one is allowed outside the palisade without a pass from me," I said.

"Well, what of it?" she replied, giving me a look that I could not call anything but saucy.

"It means," I said, "that you must go inside at once."

"And if I decline to go?"

"Then I shall take you."

"You would not dare."

She remained where she was, looking defiance.

I advanced and put my hand upon her arm. I wish to say, too, that it was my firm intention to pick her

up and carry her into the fort, although I doubt whether she expected it, as she flushed red, and shrinking away from me ran through the gate. I followed her and I said reproachfully:

"Miss Carew, my position is difficult enough; don't make it more so."

"Forgive me," she replied, her face still red, and turning, she walked away.

I proceeded with the men as if I had been in command for years, thinking then that this was the best way, and I am convinced now that I was right. I summoned Major Carew and placed him in charge of the guard for the rest of the day. He received my orders without a word, and, although he was Rose Carew's father, I took a pleasure in speaking to him sternly. Lawless I made my chief aide, and he accepted the place with such frank pleasure that I could count upon him beyond a doubt. But there were great grumblings among the other officers; I saw that, however they may have felt toward me personally, they did not relish being placed under the command of a man with my history. I soon beheld an instance of it. I had assigned a lieutenant named Worthington to the duty of assorting some ammunition, and when I passed by in order to inspect the work I found him lolling in his tent. I asked him the reason, and he responded with a supercilious curl of the lip that he did not think hurry was needed.

"Are you in the habit of deciding upon the necessity of orders after you receive them?" I asked, controlling my temper.

"I did not do so when I had them from previous commanding officers," he replied, still sneering.

"Then you will not do so now," I said.

Whereupon I sentenced him to three days' solitary confinement in our little guard-house upon a diet of bread and water, and I saw in person that the sentence

was begun. The effect of this speedy action was most enlivening, and the officers went about their duties with great briskness. As for the privates, there was no discontent among them even from the first, and I felt now that I had affairs well in hand.

Shortly after the arrest of Worthington I met Jasper.

"I congratulate you upon your advancement, cousin," he said with sleek politeness. "Times change and you ride high."

"It is true," I replied, "that I am on horseback, and I may keep the saddle while others who used to ride will have to walk."

He started a little, a movement that did not escape my eye.

"I do not quite take your meaning, cousin," he said, "but I for one certainly have never had any wish to keep you down."

"And perhaps none to help me up."

"You do me great injustice."

I had no wish to bandy words with him, in particular when it was his affectation to be polite, and I merely added:

"Since General Wayne has seen fit to leave me in command here, I shall be glad if all will co-operate with me."

"It shall give me great pleasure to obey any order that you may issue," he said, in tones that were almost mincing. I preferred that he should be openly hostile, but I walked away without replying.

Thus three or four days passed without incident, but at noon of the fourth day Osseo returned from the forest. He had discarded much of his attire, and he was now the warrior pure and simple.

"What song have the birds of the forest sung in your ear, Osseo?" I asked.

"They have sung many times," he replied, "but

their song is always the same. They tell Osseo that the hostile braves come as thick as the leaves before the whirlwind, and Hoyoquim and the white renegade, Blackstaffe, lead them on. They have heard that the Black Snake is gone, and they wish to take the fort and gather many scalps. Hoyoquim and Blackstaffe hope, too, to capture again the white maiden who was stolen from them."

"Which they shall never do!" I said with emphasis.

"Manito alone can tell," replied Osseo solemnly.

His news was of the deepest importance, but I could do nothing now save to wait the attack. In the afternoon Joe Grimes returned with the same report. At twilight, heavy with cares, I walked by the palisade, and Rose Carew again joined me.

"You are thoughtful, Captain Lee," she said.

"I have need to be," I replied, glancing at the forest.

"What do you expect there?"

"You know this ground?"

"I do," she replied, blanching a little. "It is here that the great slaughter of our army occurred."

"Then what do you think can come from that forest?" I asked.

"The savages."

"Ay, we are threatened with an Indian attack; it is more than a threat—it is a certainty, and your devoted admirer, Black Eagle, and the renegade, Blackstaffe, lead them on."

I was angry at her for coming to Fort Recovery, or I would not have spoken thus. Her face blanched again, and she turned upon me an appealing look.

"You do not mean to say that it is I who will be the cause of this attack?" she asked.

"Oh, no," I replied; "you are merely an incident"—yet I believed in my soul that she was the cause—"and do not fear, Miss Carew; behind these log walls

we shall beat them off, no matter how great their numbers. Now go into your cabin, if you would oblige me. An arrow might fly over that palisade and strike you down."

"And might not one strike you too?"

"Ay, but I would be a poor soldier if I did not take the risk. Now, I ask you to go."

She went as obediently as a little child.

Several more days passed, and there was no attack; in truth, so far as the soldiers and the officers from the East could see, there was no indication that a single Indian was within a thousand miles of us, and I began to hear murmurs at the excessive watchfulness which rested somewhat heavily upon the more slothful. I was sure that Jasper was instigating these complaints, but I took no notice and did not relax our caution. I was confirmed in my apprehensions by Osseo's repeated warnings.

A few days later a pack train reached us, and, discharging its load of supplies, prepared to return. Its commander, over whom I had no control, insisted upon camping outside the palisade, claiming that he and his men and animals would be crowded too much inside; and despite my repeated requests, even entreaties, he had his way. I gave him up for lost, knowing well that the savages would not let so tempting a bait escape them. I resolved to remain awake that night, and when I saw Rose Carew passing between the women's cabins I beckoned to her. She came, though reluctantly, and hanging back like a child that had been scolded.

"You see those lights?" I said, pointing through a crack in the palisade toward the camp fires of the pack train.

She nodded assent.

"Know, then," I said, "that General St. Clair is not the only fool who has come into the wilderness.

There are others, though perhaps not on so large a scale. The commander of those men out there is one."

I spoke with some bitterness, and she looked surprised.

"Why, they are in no danger," she exclaimed. "Many of the officers say that there is not an Indian within a hundred miles of us."

"That only proves what I said about the abundance of fools."

"Then you feel sure that the savages are near?"

"There can be no doubt of it. I have not been able to go forth and see for myself, but Osseo tells me so, and I would sooner trust his pair of eyes than all the others in the Northwest."

"Shall we beat them off?"

"I do not doubt it," I again assured her, "and you shall go back in safety to the East to wed the man of your choice. I begin to understand now why you have come again into this dangerous country. Your anxiety for him would not let you stay behind."

I spoke plainly, but it was because I felt that I had certain rights over her, almost paternal in their nature—I had saved her from the savages. But I was surprised to see how deeply her face flushed, and her figure wavered like that of a frightened deer about to flee.

"I do not understand you," she said. "Do you mean to assert that I came to watch over any one besides Major Carew?"

"Ay," I replied. "My cousin Jasper is a lucky man. Fortune has seemed always to fight for him, and never more ably than now."

The red did not depart from her cheeks and brow, but otherwise she recovered her self-possession, and changed the subject abruptly, at which I did not wonder, as a girl naturally does not like to discuss with an outsider her coming marriage. She pointed toward

the forest, which inclosed the fort with a black and circular wall.

"I have ceased to wonder at your fondness for the wilderness," she said. "There is a spell in that forest even for me, one who has felt its dangers—an uncanny spell, I grant you, but it is upon me. I feel a desire to search its depths, although I know that danger is there."

"It draws the woodman as the sea draws the sailor," I said. "I think that the chief charm lies in its majesty and silence—I don't use silence in its strict sense, because neither the sea nor the forest is ever wholly silent."

She made no reply, but stood gazing at the impenetrable wilderness. She had moods in which she was grave, even solemn, and I liked to look at her then, when her beauty took an aspect, severe like that of a vestal virgin. It endured but a few moments. Then she said with a little laugh:

"I am rude, but this wilderness took my thoughts far away."

"Since you have condescended to come back to Fort Recovery," I replied in the same tone, "I have a command to repeat to you, and it is that to-morrow during the battle you stay in one of the cabins under shelter."

My tone was grave now.

"I know that we shall have one," I replied. "You see the provocation to it," and I pointed again through the crack in the palisades at the twinkling camp fires of the pack train.

A phantom rose out of the ground beside us, and resolved itself into the shape of a man, tall, erect, and but half clothed. It was Osseo.

"What song do the birds sing to-night, Osseo?" I asked, wishing to speak in a light tone in the presence of a lady. But there was no lightness in his reply.

"The warriors come," he replied, "as many as when they slew the army of the General-who-never-walks,

and more. Before the sun marks the noon hour tomorrow the scalps of those will hang at the belts of the warriors! Manito has made them mad that they may go laughing to death!"

He stretched out his long arm and pointed toward the supply train.

"I know it, Osseo," I said, "but I can do nothing. I have even begged them to come inside the fort."

But I made another effort. I went forth to the packers, repeated Osseo's news and again asked them to come in. They laughed at me, and two or three went so far as to hint that I was a coward. But I refused to take offence, repeated the attempt with similar failure, and then, returning to the fort, placed nearly half my force on guard, making ceaseless rounds in person to see that nothing was neglected. It was not my intent to take any sleep that night; in truth, I could not have slept had I wished it, and the hours passed with terrible slowness. The forest made no sign, the fresh foliage there sighing gently in the wind, and naught else stirring. But I knew that this stillness was ominous; the savage loves a sudden onslaught, and when the ignorant least expects him he comes. The night passed, and the first light of day as narrow as a sword-blade showed under the edge of the horizon. Then the war-whoop, issuing at once from thousands of throats, burst from the forest, and the warriors in swarms poured forward among the trees.

I was watching by the palisade, and I saw their first onset, as they swept like a flood upon the camp of the pack train. I beheld a multitude of flitting brown forms, the flash of upraised tomahawks, and the puff-puff of white smoke from the rifles. The war-whoop, which had swelled at first in one mighty yell, now fell and then rose again, becoming shriller, but continually piercing the drum of the ear as if with the thrust of a knife.

My men fired from the palisade, and here and there one of the flitting brown forms fell, but the wood still poured forth its savage horde. The men in the camp beheld upon them the death of which they had been warned, and at which they had laughed. They grasped their rifles, and at the same moment the stroke of the tomahawk fell. The camp was destroyed as if by one of our Western tornadoes; most of the packers were killed before they could fight, and the rest, driven on by terror, fled to the fort, where we scarce had time to admit them before the horde was upon us too. The attack was so sudden, though expected by many, and the result so sweeping, that the effect of it was unreal. Our eyes seemed to deceive us, but our reason told us it was true.

No man fattens upon his food faster than the red savage, and swinging aloft the bleeding scalps and filling all the forest with their triumphant whoops, the horde rushed upon Fort Recovery, eager for the prize which they had no doubt of winning. Had I been without responsibilities I should have sought the figure of Hoyoquim, sure that he was somewhere in the van, in order that I might send toward him an unerring bullet. I bore the chief no special animosity, but with him fallen the spirit must go out of the attack. The duties of command, however, lay heavy upon me, and I ran from point to point of the wall, urging the men to keep their coolness and to fire with certain aim.

The rattle of our rifles ran in a ring around the palisade, the men standing in the face of all this yelling and frightful swarm with a firmness that was beyond praise, and a storm of bullets broke full upon the brown mass that was launched against us. I expected that the savages would fall back, knowing their dislike of the open assault; but motives of unusual power urged them, and shouting their war-cries and firing their rifles, they rushed to the very foot of the palisade, some hewing at

the wood with their tomahawks, and others, drunk with blood-lust, seeking to climb up and spring among us.

I thanked God in that moment for a long experience of Indian warfare, and, knowing that any case of faint-heartedness on our side would give to the savages their opening, I watched every point, and always, despite our scanty numbers, I sent relief to any part where the soldiers seemed to yield. Old Joe Grimes rushed past me once, his face black with powder smoke, and a real joy shining in his eyes.

"Didn't I tell you men'll fight better without any commander?" he cried. "See how they stand! A fool of a soldier would 'a had us all beat afore this."

Which I thought rather hard upon me, but I had no time to argue the matter with Joe.

Three of the savages cleared the wooden wall and sprang among us, but they were shot dead before they touched the ground. Yet others took their places and made the same attempt. Never before had I seen such tenacity in assault by the Indians, and now I began to hear the powerful voice of Hoyoquim driving them on, though I sought in vain for the sight of his figure. He was hidden from me by the palisade.

The wall was lowest on the western side, and suddenly it was crested with the forms of the savages. The defenders recoiled for a moment at the sight, and I sprang forward to lead them anew. Two or three of the Indians fired at me, and at the same time I heard a cry from a point inside the wall. A bullet whistled by me, but with involuntary motion I turned at the sound of the cry, which had in it a familiar note. I saw Jasper, a smoking rifle in his hand, and Rose Carew standing before him, her hand upon the same rifle. That picture was impressed upon my brain in the flash of a moment; what caused it and what followed it I knew not, as the savages on the wall demanded all my attention. We drove them back with our rifles, and

when I turned again Rose Carew and Jasper were no longer there.

I had no time to ask questions then, as our little fort was a vortex of flame and smoke. We were scarce two hundred within the walls, and more than two thousand outside were seeking to reach us, panting with a desire for another revel of slaughter. We kept close to the palisade, and their bullets, passing over our heads, fell on the ground. I could hear the steady patter-patter behind us like the beat of heavy rain. However fast they fired, they never ceased to utter their war-whoop, a cry so appalling to the inexperienced, and which more than once has routed white men with its suggestion of torture and death. But my soldiers were stanch and true, and the savages fell fast before their rifles.

A long time they pressed the assault, and at last they gathered themselves for a rush fiercer than any that had gone before. It too was beaten back at the wooden wall, and the war-whoop ceased so suddenly that the silence was astonishing. The Indian army melted away as if the hand of a magician had waved it into space, and when I looked again I saw only the bodies of the fallen lying here and there in the open, and beyond them the woods silent and dark as ever. Nowhere was there a sign of a living human being.

"They have fled!" exclaimed Lawless, my aide, who had stayed close beside me throughout the assault.

"But not far," I replied; "they are lying there in the woods ready to shoot the first of us who venture beyond the palisade."

"One would think that the earth had swallowed 'em up," he muttered to himself. And in truth it seemed so. We saw only the forest fresh in its spring foliage, and heard only the wind blowing through the leaves and boughs. But I knew well that the crafty savages were still near, despairing of the open assault, but hoping to win by trick.

I began the round of the palisade, and I came to the little bastion where Jasper had commanded a small detachment.

"Well, we have beaten 'em off for the time, cousin," he said.

"Ay," I replied, "but it seems to me, Cousin Jasper, that at the most critical period of the assault one of your bullets flew wide of the true mark."

He retained his presence of mind wonderfully.

"You saw that, did you?" he said. "I fired at an Indian inside the palisade, thinking that he was an enemy, when it was Osseo. It was a natural mistake at such a moment of excitement. Fortunately, Miss Carew knocked up my gun in time."

It was a glib and plausible answer, as Osseo in truth was near me when the shot was fired, and I was in doubt. So I passed on to note what damage had been done, and strengthen the garrison as best I could. We had escaped most marvellously well. But a single man of ours had been killed, and the little garrison, triumphant and sanguine, was eager for the savages to attack anew. I felt a great swell of joy. We had beaten off the largest army of Indians ever yet gathered in the West, and I believed that all other attacks upon us would fail in the same way. And in thinking upon it I could not forget my own personal advantage. Few would dare to reproach me with the past in the face of this. Again I was deeply thankful to General Wayne.

I ordered food and drink to be served to the soldiers, and then I entered the women's quarters. I found Mrs. Winchester and Rose Carew together. The young Englishwoman was very pale, but her quiet manner showed that her courage had not failed.

"What awful sounds!" she said. "The shrieking of those savages was more frightful than their bullets."

"We have driven them off," I said, "and I do not

think that they will make such another assault, though we may be besieged for some time yet."

To Rose Carew I said:

"You promised me that you would remain in the cabin during the fighting."

She showed again that I could never anticipate her mood, for her reply and manner were as meek as those of a nun.

"It is true," she replied. "I gave you the promise, and I broke it. But I have no excuse to plead."

Her look was not only meek but appealing, and I could say naught else. Had I known more of the incident which I had but half witnessed I felt that I could have spoken further, but as it was I left the cabin and returned to the defence, a duty that I could not neglect for any personal matter.

The savages, finding that none of us came forth to be shot down from ambush, soon gave proof of their continued presence by opening a scattered fire. Their best marksmen crept from cover to cover, trying to pick off all who incautiously showed their heads over the palisade, but succeeded in wounding only two or three of our men, for which we took a tenfold revenge.

"We broke their hearts when they tried to rush us," said Joe Grimes in great glee. "Mr. Red Man has made a big mistake."

"Yes," I said, "the storming of forts is not to his taste. He will never get inside this palisade."

An hour or two later we saw a white rag fluttering among the trees, and I ordered my men to hold their fire, that the flag of truce might be brought forward. Its bearer proved to be the renegade Blackstaffe. Then I called Osseo and Joe Grimes.

"I am going to talk to Blackstaffe," I said. "If any one of the savages fires at me, kill the renegade instantly."

They made no reply, but the careful manner in

which they handled their rifles showed that in case of trickery Blackstaffe was a doomed man. I raised my head above the palisade and asked the renegade what he wished.

"It is you, Mr. Lee, and you are in command; I know that it must be so, or this garrison would not have made such a clever defence."

You can catch a goose by sprinkling salt on its tail, but I was not to be taken in with such compliments.

"Bring forward the chief, Hoyoquim, the Black Eagle," I said, "and let him vouch for the fact that I shall not be fired upon while we talk. Otherwise I shall order my men to begin shooting again."

He looked injured.

"You are unfair," he said; "you see that I trust you, but you do not trust me."

"We understand each other perfectly," I replied. "You know that I am to be trusted, and I know that you are not. You know, too, that I know both of these facts."

He did not argue the matter, but disappeared in the forest, returning presently with Hoyoquim. The chief was in all the glory and hideousness of his war-paint, and in truth was a ferocious and impressive figure.

I felt some one tugging at my arm, and turning, I saw that it was old Joe Grimes.

"Let me fire at him," he said. "Just one little bullet, and it will save the border at least a thousand lives."

"Don't think of such a thing, Joe," I replied severely. "It would be the basest treachery. He comes under the flag of truce."

"It's right to kill a snake whenever you find him, then you get rid of p'ison. Jest one shot, John, and Osseo at the same time can pick off that d—d renegade, Blackstaffe."

His voice became pleading.

"Nonsense, Joe!" I replied. "It can not be thought of. Be silent."

"Do you guarantee that I shall not be fired upon while we are talking?" I shouted to Hoyoquim.

"I promise you that it shall not be," he replied. "May Manito strike me with his lightning if I lie!"

I was satisfied, and I told Blackstaffe, who evidently was chosen spokesman, to go on.

"You have made a good defence," he began in the smooth tone that he had adopted from the first, "but you must see that final success is impossible. The warriors of all the allied tribes, the bravest and the best, are here. They outnumber you ten to one. They are the same men that destroyed St. Clair and his soldiers. A thousand skulls bleaching in the forest tell you what the Indians can do. We ask you to surrender and to trust to our mercy."

I laughed.

"Your mercy?" I replied. "I know what that is—outrage for the women, the stake for the men!"

"There you make a mistake," he replied. "I admit that the Indians are not particularly soft-hearted, but I am a white man, and I shall use all my influence with them. I do not boast when I say that I have much. As it is, we shall certainly take you, and you know what the Indian is when he is inflamed by battle. I could do nothing then."

"I have no more to say to you except to come and take us if you can," I replied, and with that I ended my colloquy. The renegade and Hoyoquim quickly retreated to the woods, and I came down from the palisade. There was another hour of silence, and unconsciously I found myself strolling back toward the quarters of the women. Moreover, I had been revolving a project in my mind, and I asked Rose Carew what I should do with Jasper while the siege lasted.

"It is necessary for some one to be here in charge of this part of the fort," she said. "Let it be Major Lee."

Now I understood her, and I was sorry that I had asked the question, although more than half expecting her answer; in truth, it was my desire to oblige her that had prompted me to ask it. I now knew that she wished to keep Jasper out of danger. So, with a sense of self-martyrdom, I sent him to the post that she sought for him.

The savages by and by began a desultory attack, again pursuing their favourite methods, firing from the cover of grass, stumps, and logs, and exposing themselves but little. They did no damage to us save the infliction of one or two slight wounds, and old Joe Grimes laughed with derisive glee.

"I could live on things like this," he said. "I haven't had such fun in ten years."

"Perhaps Blackstaffe would like to rush us again," I said, sharing to some extent in his grim satisfaction.

"Not he," replied old Joe. "He ain't goin' to hire a dog and bark himself. He'll let the Black Eagle do all the rushin' an' keep his own dirty skin in safety."

This crackling fire lasted throughout the afternoon. The bullets often flew over the palisade and fell in the inclosure with a light pit-pat like the drop of hailstones, but we seldom replied, preferring to keep our ammunition and to watch vigilantly for another rush. Major Carew came to me in the course of his duty, and began to pay me extravagant compliments on the success of our defence.

"We should have been lost without you," he said; "and second to you only has been your cousin, Major Lee. He risked his life a half-dozen times in repelling the assault."

I looked fixedly at him, and his eyes fell. He was not so bold and determined as Jasper, and in truth I did

not consider him a villain at all, despite his inchoate treason; merely smooth and self-seeking, and desirous of a brilliant match, in a worldly sense, for his daughter, and yet for the moment I despised him. So feeling, I turned my back upon him without a word and went to another part of the palisade. I could have reminded him of what he and Knowlton had said one night in my presence in Danville, but I thought it an ungenerous revenge. Knowlton was back there now, as quiet as a lamb, though carefully praising the Government at times.

The afternoon waned and night came. I feared the darkness, knowing well that it was most suited to the wiles and strategems of the savage, but an hour or two later Osseo, who had slipped from the fort, returned and said to me: "Let Lee rest easy; there will not be another attack." He added nothing to this brief statement, but I doubted not the correctness of his words. Then in truth the savages must have had their faces burned finely if, despite the eagerness of Hoyoquim and Blackstaffe, they refused to continue the siege.

The night deepened and darkened, and then glimmering lights appeared here and there at the edge of the forest. It was the savages bearing torches and seeking their dead. We might have picked off some of them from the palisade, but I forbade my men to fire. Old Joe Grimes considered it a waste of mercy, and swore furiously at what he called my foolishness, but obeyed the order nevertheless.

I was standing beside the palisade watching the twinkling lights through a crack and wondering what were the thoughts of these savages, who considered us interlopers, when I heard beside me the light step that I had learned to know so well. Rose Carew, in virtue of her experience among the savages, had become in some sort a privileged character, and now that the battle was over, I could not blame her for coming forth from

the cabin. I moved a little to one side and let her look between the two stakes of the palisade.

"What are they doing?" she asked.

"Carrying away their dead."

"Then the attack is over?"

"I think so. Savage races do not like the open assault. It requires the training of white men to carry through such attempts. They have failed where they expected another great triumph."

"I can imagine their feelings," she said. "We know what ours would be if we held this country and saw some one coming to take it."

Now, I have a certain sympathy for the savage, but my knowledge of him does not permit it to go very far. There are too many of our own people who wish to charge all the faults of our wars with him upon the white man, but that is only the sentimental view. I know the red man's noble qualities, but I can not forget his great faults either, and the history of his relations with us is filled with his atrocities. But I did not reply, merely continuing to watch the removal of the dead.

The last light died by and by, and the last Indian figure vanished. But I stood there yet, watching the black forest and the girl beside me. Then from those sombre depths came a strange wild note, but clear and sweet. It rose, filled the air, and did not die.

Rose Carew looked at me, and I saw a smile pass over her face.

"It is he," she said. "It can be none else."

I nodded. The note following a plaintive air swelled higher and higher, and approached the fort. Numerous heads now appeared upon the palisade, and I did not restrain them, knowing well that the Indians were gone. I called to Winchester, and he came.

"You, too, should be here to greet him," I said.

"I am glad to have the chance," he replied.

The figure of a man playing the flute presently emerged from the forest, and then the features of De Chamillard came into view. I ordered the gate thrown open, and, still playing his flute, he walked through the palisade. But when he saw Rose Carew and me he let the instrument fall from his lips, and made one of the finest bows that I had ever seen.

"It is indeed Miss Carew?" he cried, "or—or Mrs. —Mrs.—you shake your head—then it is Miss Carew still! Truly it was a good angel that prompted me to leave the red man and come back to the white man. And it is the great hunter, too! And behold, here is his companion, the red chief, who poetically styles himself the Son of the Evening Star; and yonder, too, is the brave Briton, M. de Winchester! On my soul, 'tis quite a family reunion."

Thus he chattered in the gayest manner, and I could not tell whether he was in jest or earnest. Yet I doubted not that he was most glad to see us; and as for himself, I could note but little change in his appearance since last we parted in these woods. I cast a look at the forest and he followed it.

"Do not disturb yourself about the savages, mon cher Lee," he said. "They are gone far from here now. You know how they can speed like ghosts through the wilderness. Your hospitality was too great, and they would flee from a repetition of it. That is why I am here. I do not like such rapid flights, and I concluded to come and stay with you awhile, a matter of the utmost ease to me, as I am still playing my rôle of one stricken by Manito—a great advantage, M. Lee, I assure you, as I am the only man, perhaps, in all this vast northwestern wilderness who has perfect freedom. It was a happy thought of yours that suggested the part to me, and again I thank you."

I could not tell for the second time whether he was in jest or in earnest, but leaving the palisade, I walked

toward the cabins. Osseo, who would not have moved for a king, was in our path, but he stepped quickly aside for De Chamillard, bestowing upon him a look that was half pity, half reverence. None, not even De Chamillard himself, could ever persuade Osseo that the Frenchman was not in truth stricken by the lightning of Manito, and therefore in his special keeping.

I was entitled now to a little rest, and I determined to take it while I played host to De Chamillard. I introduced him to Mrs. Winchester, to whom he paid the same deference that he had shown to Rose Carew, murmuring that while their countries might quarrel and go to war, no Frenchman could ever forget the beauty and grace of the English ladies. Then over a little wine he told me the tale of his wanderings.

"I have been all this while with the savages," he said, "taking no part in their wars or their cruelties, but roaming as I wish, even to the head of the Great Lakes and past the Father of Waters. The character which I took upon me and of which I could not now rid myself if I would, protects me everywhere. I have seen mighty rivers and mightier lakes, and great forests and savage men, and I have seen life. And now, dear Lee, if you can, tell me of that France which has perhaps forgotten one of the humblest of her sons, but which I can not forget though I go deeper and deeper into the woods, where no word of the dear land can follow me."

I told him of all the strange and terrible things that were happening there, or at least the story of them as it came to us in the woods, and I saw all the lightness of his manner disappear for the while. He was silent a long time, but at last he said:

"Poor France! I suppose that I ought to be there, but how can I go when my conscience will let me fight for neither party?"

I too was silent, contemplating this exile of old

Versailles, seemingly so bizarre here in our wilderness, and yet taking his place in it with such ease. And I knew also that while he was of the old order his heart was more with the new than the old.

The next day all traces of sadness were gone from his manner, and he dropped too the rôle which he had so long played among the savages. Instead he was the courtier, giving the greater part of his devotion to Mrs. Winchester and Miss Carew, but neglecting none other of the ladies.

"Had I known that they were here, my dear Lee," he said to me with the utmost sincerity, "I should have come sooner. The only flaw that I find in the wilderness is the absence of the feminine gender, as one knows it in the capitals of the world. Primitive man is well enough, but may the gods save me from primitive woman! Civilization is necessary on woman's account."

He was an established favourite with men and women alike in less than twenty-four hours, and I also found that his report concerning the savages was correct in every detail. They retreated northward so fast that our scouts could scarce keep pace with them, and not long afterward I read with abounding delight General Wayne's letter of congratulation to me.

"It is the most brilliant success that we have won in the West for a long time, dear Jack," he wrote. "In truth it is the only one, and God knows that it came at the right time! I have described it in full in the report that I have just forwarded to the President, and do not be afraid that I have not done you full justice."

Did ever man have a better friend than I had in him?

CHAPTER XXXV

A FULL CONFESSION

"I TELL thee, Jack, thy debt of gratitude to me is not half as heavy as mine to thee. That victory of thine at Fort Recovery has maintained my credit and put heart in the soldiers as nothing else could. Let me hear no more of this nonsense. I use thee because thou art the best tool that my hand can find."

It was General Wayne who was speaking, and we sat alone in the little log room at Fort Deposit, another post that we had built in the Northwestern wilderness, and yet farther than Fort Greeneville toward the heart of the Indian country. All our army save small garrisons was united there, and we were preparing for the great stroke. And with us, too, was Rose Carew. After the battle at Fort Recovery she might have had to return to Cincinnati perforce, but the way was closed by the savages, and of necessity she came on with us to Fort Deposit. Now we knew that the Indian power was assembling in our front, and we expected a speedy trial of the issue.

General Wayne turned his attention to a piece of paper, across which lines ran in zigzags, with here and there the picture of some wild animal. It was a map made by Osseo, each wild animal representing Indian warriors of a particular tribe, and I have seen many a map drawn by European experts that was not half so good.

"Your red friend gives me the disposition of their forces," he said, dropping his thee and thou, "and I think we can meet them, Jack, trick for trick. We may rely on Osseo, may we not?"

"As surely as on the rising and the setting of the sun," I replied with emphasis.

He smiled.

"I know that you are right," he said. "But, Jack, I wish to talk of the future—that is, your future. There is a matter, Jack, near your heart, of which I want to speak, and you will excuse the freedom of an old comrade in mentioning it, because it is now as a comrade and not as your general that I do speak. You were a fine blade in the old days, Jack, and you had a glib tongue with the ladies. Nor have your years in the woods been unkind to you. I have seen the eyes that you make at Miss Carew. What! blushing? a reprobate like you! But, Jack, you love her—I know it; don't fib to me about it."

"It is true, general," I replied; "I do love Miss Carew, but the best that a man like myself can do is to conceal it, or at least try."

"It is because you are such a fool, Jack, that I have wished to speak to you of this matter. And it is because of it, too, that I shall send you back to the East. She will be there before you—her father has had enough of the wilderness—and I tell you, Jack, you must go in and win, if for no other reason than to upset that cursed cousin of yours. The fellow has power, and he has tried to weaken me in my command here. I tell you, Jack, you must beat him in love as you have beat him in this war!"

He was the fiery, enthusiastic Mad Anthony Wayne of the Revolution who was now talking, and I caught from him the spirit of hope. "Never mind the past," he would say, "follow the girl, Jack; follow her, I tell you."

It seemed a singular chance that another friend of mine should speak to me upon the same subject the next morning. This was Mrs. Winchester. The Winchesters were still with us, though they were to pass to the British post on the Miami the following day.

"Your cousin expects to wed Miss Carew," she said, "when this war is over and they shall have returned to the East."

"Has he her promise?" I could not refrain from asking.

"That is a question that you had best ask her."

"He might say that he had it, but I would not believe him," I continued.

"You do not love your cousin," she said, looking at me curiously.

"As much as he loves me," I replied.

Then she began to tell me of Major Carew and his ambition for his daughter; he was fond of place and power, perhaps excessively so, and he would have his daughter to wed to advantage. Although not saying it in so many words, Mrs. Winchester indicated plainly that Jasper was the choice of Major Carew, and well he might be, since he was one of the richest men in our country. All my own property, escheated after my conviction for treason—I had been treated like the loyalist exiles—had been obtained by Jasper, and at small cost to himself, as I learned. He was now swollen with mine as well as his own, and my heart burned with a fierce rage that he should steal this girl too. Nothing now should keep me back. I, too, would go to the East, and if I could not obtain her for myself I might at least keep her from his arms. I was so much lost in these emotions that I did not notice until presently that Mrs. Winchester was watching me with the greatest keenness and curiosity. But she turned her eyes quickly away when they met mine.

"You are resolved to go back to your old home, are you not?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied with emphasis.

"You should tell Miss Carew so," she said.

That was an odd remark for Mrs. Winchester to make, but I did not notice its nature at the time, my mind being so full of Rose Carew and Jasper. Yet it chimed well with my wishes. I would see Miss Carew, and I would tell her the kind of man Jasper was!—No, I could not do that—it would not be the act of a gentleman—but I must talk to her before this battle. I was glad of any excuse now to seek her presence. In the narrow space inclosed by the palisade of Fort Deposit such an opportunity was not long lacking. When we walked together on the little parade ground I told her that we should march without further delay against the Indian power, and the chiefs would not avoid a battle; either their strength would be broken, or they would regain all the Western country.

"But I have decided," I said, "that in any event I shall return to the East," and then I added, with an effort at lightness, "you see that you can not escape me; you shall see me there."

Her face was turned from me then, and I noticed only the gravity of her reply:

"You are right to come."

"Others who know my history might not say so," I replied.

"But all the world will know of your great services here," she said. "How many people on this Western border have you saved from torture and death and worse than death?"

She turned her eyes upon me then. They were luminous and moist with the suspicion of tears. She felt pity for me, I knew. One does not always want pity, but I was moved by it.

"If there is any credit due me," I said, "I wish to

have it. I am not such an affected fool as to deny it. And I should like to have my good name back again. Do you think, Miss Carew, that all these years in the wilderness among savage red men, and almost as savage white men, have hardened me to the shame or made me forget it? I persuaded myself once that it had, and I believed it—almost believed it—until you came. You called me back, not that you meant to do it, or that I meant you should. But all the old rebellion and fierce desire for revenge upon the world that had condemned me rose up again. Do you think I could ever forget that time? Remember that I was only a boy, and the world seemed bright and good. I had name and station, I had won honours in the war, I had comrades of my own age, and I was trusted by great men far older than myself. Think, then, of what I was called upon to endure—this sudden blow! Could you have wondered if I had become the worst of criminals in very truth?"

She turned her eyes upon me then, and they were still luminous and soft with the mist of tears. But she did not speak. My heart was hot within me. I had held down my grief and rage so long that now, at the first lifting of restraint, they burst forth in a flood.

"Do you suppose that I have forgotten it, any detail of it?" I repeated fiercely. "Do you not know what it is to feel that you are despised by all men, that you must always have their contempt? Do you not think that all of it, as hideous as ever, came back to me when I saw you and saw how far away you were? Do you not think I felt as deeply as if I were still the convicted boy, every word of my cousin Jasper, when we met again and he taunted me with that old memory?"

"But you were not guilty," she said gently.

"No, I was not," I replied, and it was the first time since my conviction that my pride had ever let me deny it; "but what of that? The evidence said I was, and the court could not do otherwise than it did. The

world, the world that was mine, is convinced that I am guilty, and I might as well be."

"Now it is not your better self, John Lee, that is speaking," she suddenly interrupted me. "If you are not guilty you are not, and the opinion of all the men in the world can not make you so. I would go back to the East, I would assert my innocence, and I would prove it; even yet I would do so."

Her eyes were shining, but there were no tears in them now; instead, they sparkled with brilliant fire. It was this that bewildered me for the moment and drew me on.

"I will go back," I said. "I have finally resolved on that, but whether I shall prove my innocence I know not. It is not alone the hope of regaining my old position that induces me to go; it is less potent than something else." And now I lost my head fully. "When a man knows that he is condemned, and a woman speaks the only word of sympathy that he has heard in ten years, what can you expect of him? Would he not fall in love with her, even if she were not the best and most beautiful woman that he had ever seen? And when a chance came to him to help her would he not do it, and would not that help itself make him love her the more? You know well of whom I am talking, Rose, dearest Rose! I can call you so because I love you and I can not help it, nor would I help it if I could."

She tried to say something, but I would not hear her. The words came up from my heart like a flood all the more powerful because held back so long.

"I know that it is folly—nay, more, presumption—in me," I continued, "but I will say what I feel. You do not understand what a luxury it is to speak one's real mind after being denied it for many years. I know that I am a miserable object to utter words of love to a good woman, but I say them because I love you!"

"Oh, hush! hush!" she murmured. "Do not talk so!"

"You will be offered love by better men," I said, "but none will offer you a better love than mine, and I am glad to avow now what I feel."

I spoke the truth. It was a joy to me to say to her that I loved her. What I had sworn to myself to keep secret I now told her with all the fire and passion of a boy in his first love, and I was proud of it. She turned her head away and said nothing. What feeling looked from her eyes I knew not, but I could not check the torrent of my speech. At last I repeated:

"If I am spared by the battle I shall return to the East, and you shall see me there."

Then I turned, and not looking back, hurried into the fort. She murmured some words, but I could not stay to listen. I could not bear to hear her reproach me for my folly.

It was folly, I repeated in my cooler moments, yet I was not sorry for it; instead, I felt mental exaltation.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE FALLEN TIMBERS

THE August sun swung clear of the earth and threw a flood of light over the army as it advanced through the deep woods. We had started from Fort Deposit at daybreak, leaving there our heavy baggage, the women, and a small garrison, and at last we were marching to meet the gathered power of the Indian tribes. The fate of the Northwest hung upon the event, yet around us was only the silence of the wilderness, the murmur of the wind through the deep foliage, and the singing of the birds. Even the soldiers, who usually, in the face of death, see the lighter side of things, refrained from jest or other comment and walked solemnly on to meet the elusive and terrible foe, against whom another army had marched only to slaughter.

I felt a thrill alike of pride and apprehension as I looked upon those around me. I knew how the iron hand of their general had moulded them into shape until they were fit to meet the savage tribes, and I knew, too, that it would be a mortal blow to him if he failed. Yet the fate and hopes of one man were but little compared with the desolation that torch and tomahawk would spread along the border behind us if we were beaten. Surely if men ever had a spur to valour it was we.

The sun, a ball of red and gold, crept up the arch of the sky. The army, still silent in speech, gave forth

the usual murmur of arms and the tread of men and horses. The sunbeams glanced along the leaves of the trees, not yet burned brown by the summer sun, and shot in long arrows of light over the surface of the Little Miami. But the woods were yet silent. They gave forth no sign of the enemy. We knew that the allied power of the Northwestern tribes lay near us, but the waving of no scalp lock, the glint of no tomahawk, met our eyes. That foe whom we were going to meet was as wary, as elusive, and as terrible as ever. The silence was oppressive, ominous, and I longed to hear the defiant war-whoop.

General Wayne signalled to me. His face was anxious, and he made no effort to disguise it.

"Are you sure that they are before us, Jack?" he asked.

"Osseo says so, and the chief is never mistaken. Moreover, old Joe Grimes and a dozen other scouts bear witness to the truth of his words."

"I did not doubt them, Jack, but I like not this silence. I hate a hidden foe. 'Twas not this way in the war with the English, as you know, Jack. Then it was hammer and tongs, give and take, and the best man to win, with no ill feeling afterward. But here it is an enemy whom you can not find, and you know not what to expect when you do find him."

But Mad Anthony Wayne would not allow impatience to defeat caution. Forward we went, hugging the Little Miami on our right, that we might not be flanked there, the scouts swarming on our left and in our front. Near me was Lawless, now my devoted friend, and farther on was Jasper. His face was turned from me, but I knew that his lips were as white as chalk, and that he saw the figure of Hoyoquim in every glade. The footsteps of the army were softened by the deep turf. The wind rose a little and sang a song through the leaves of the trees. But there was no

hostile sound. Our eyes saw and our ears heard only the peace that we had learned never to trust.

On we went, still hugging the river as a swordsman hugs a wall, and the wilderness deepened. The trees were denser and the grass grew higher. Before us rose a dark mass of fallen forest thrown down by a tornado, and looking toward it I suddenly saw a spot of faint pink appear against its background and then darken into flame. The crack of the rifle shot, sharp and distinct, came to our ears, and it was followed by another and others. A sputtering fire came too from the high grass on our right, and then the scouts bounded into view. But we needed no word from them; we knew now that the Indian army lay in the grass and the fallen timber. And we were ready. There was fierce exultation in that thought.

General Wayne was near me when the Indian attack began. He turned and brought down a heavy hand upon my shoulder:

"We are face to face with 'em at last, and it is not a surprise; I thank God for that, Jack!"

I think that he spoke unconsciously, and because the long and great tension of his mind found relief in the sudden opening of the battle.

The fire of the Indians rose to a steady crackle, with the defiant war-whoop swelling at intervals above it. Yet the warriors still lay hidden. Not one of their brown faces could we see, and our soldiers already were falling. But the army remained steady. I noticed it with joy. The long and diligent training had paid. Always the men had been told to do that most difficult of things—to remain firm in the face of hidden death; and now they obeyed. The bullets flying from the fallen trees and the long grass whistled among us, and the soldiers here and there continued to fall; but on the army went, steady and resolute, into the deepening fire.

I kept close to General Wayne, and I marked the unconscious workings of the mind of this man, who was prone to speak as he thought.

"Good lads! good lads!" he said in a rapid undertone, like the patter of a subdued fire of musketry. "They don't flinch! Look how they go against a death that they can not see, but which they know is there! Ha! this is worthy of Stony Point! No, on my soul 'tis better!"

He stopped suddenly and called me. The fire on our left was growing extremely heavy—as heavy as any that I witnessed at St. Clair's defeat, and it was spreading, too, around our flank. They were seeking to repeat their old plan of surrounding us, pressing our army into a huddle, and then shooting us down from covert. But the general's eye was quick to see.

"We must have none of that, Jack," he cried. "Bid the left flank advance with the bayonet and we'll rouse up these fellows."

I delivered his order and galloped back to the general, and then we faced the fallen timber. Innumerable spouts of flame came from the tree trunks and upthrust boughs, and through the smoke now we could see the brown and naked forms of the warriors as they leaped from one covert to another. From the left came the boom of the cannon and the crash of our own rifle fire preparing the way for the bayonet charge. Then it died suddenly, and I knew that the men were advancing with the cold steel which no savage who was ever born can face. At the same moment the general gave the word to us in the centre. Up went the bayonets in a flash of light, and our line swept down on the fallen trees.

My horse was killed by a bullet, but I sprang clear of him, drew my sword, and rushed on in the charge. The fire in our faces seemed to redouble, and the flash of the exploding powder became one great, blinding

blaze; but on we went into it and through it, and then we leaped among the fallen trees.

The bayonet was raised and the savages fled from its cold touch. We roused them out of the brush like a swarm of partridges, and they could not stand before us. Then they learned that they had not come against an ambushed rabble like St. Clair's force, but a trained army led by the best men in the West. Again I felt the thrill of exultation as the line of bayonets flashed in the brushwood, and the naked warriors, leaping from their coverts, ran in terror. On our left we saw the same gleam, and we knew that it came from the bayonets of our comrades who were driving the enemy before them with a speed not less than ours.

The savages ceased to utter the defiant war-whoop. On all sides they fled, a frightened swarm, pursued by the avenging bayonets and stricken down by the rifle fire, the forms of their dead scattered all through the brushwood and high grass.

A tall figure rose out of the smoke beside me and a voice shouted in my ear:

"Who's blinkin' like a frog in a thunderstorm now, John?"

It was old Joe Grimes, his face one great blaze of triumph.

"You're right," I replied. "They can't stand the flash of the bayonet in their eyes."

"Bayonet, hell!" he cried. "It ain't the bayonet that's doin' 'em! It's this!" and he tapped the barrel of his rifle as he spoke. The next moment he was gone in the timber, hot upon the trail of the beaten savages. But I knew that he would never allow any of the credit of the victory to the regular soldiers, or to that weapon despised by all frontiersmen, the bayonet.

We passed on through all the grass and fallen timber, driving the savages so fast that our run never dropped to a walk, and winning the victory so soon that only

our vanguard was unable to get into the battle, the rear ranks panting and rushing through the hot sun only to find the work done when they arrived.

I came near General Wayne again in the pursuit.

"It was quick—eh, Jack!" he cried, his face not concealing his triumph.

"Ay, quick," I replied, "and thorough too."

"After 'em, lads!" he cried. "Don't give 'em time to turn on us!"

It was a difficult matter to pursue the savages. They melted before us like ghosts in the dark, but we knew as we pressed on that they would have no chance to rally and cut us down with a fire from ambush. I was hot with the pursuit, and having a better trained and keener eye than the soldiers for such work, I marked the tall form of a warrior fleeing through the woods, and kept it in sight.

The chase led me directly from my comrades and into the deeper forest. The scattering fire behind me became feeble, but I noticed little else in my eagerness to overtake or bring down the warrior. I judged from his size and the splendour of his garb that he must be a chief at least, and my zeal increased. I strove to reload my rifle as I ran, but he led me in such a rapid chase that I could not do it, and giving up the attempt, I loosened the pistol in my belt.

I was scarce twenty yards away when the warrior suddenly stopped, and turning about, stood stock still, gazing at me. Then I recognised the lofty features and haughty gaze of Little Turtle, the great chief of the Miamis.

He struck his hand upon his breast and said in a tone of mingled dignity and sadness:

"Fire, my brother! Mechecunnaqua, this day, has seen his people beaten and their power destroyed forever. The land was once the land of the red man, but it is now the land of the white man. The will of Manito

is done. Since Mechecunnaqua is to die, he is glad that he is to die by the hand of a brave enemy—an enemy whom he has loved."

I lowered my pistol. I remembered that night in the Miami village when he looked upon his escaping prisoner and then looked away.

"You did not command the Indian army to-day, Mechecunnaqua?" I said.

"No," he replied. "I was but the chief of my own tribe."

"Wherein God was kind to us," I said.

He bowed to my compliment, but I saw the flash of his eye, and I knew that he believed it true.

"Be our friend, O Mechecunnaqua," I said, and I turned away.

I left him standing there alone in the forest, a defeated and fallen king, a prey to I knew not what gloomy thoughts, but never have I had cause to regret lowering my weapon. He was the leader in making the great treaty of peace the next year, and now the mighty chief, Little Turtle, who more than once led the allied tribes to victory, lives among us, our long-time and faithful friend.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE ONLY WAY

I RETURNED toward the battlefield, thoughtful and sobered. I had seen the other side of the victory. But before I reached the fallen timbers Osseo rose up in my path.

"Manito has been kind to Lee to-day," he said. "Manito loves him."

"How so, Osseo?" I asked in some surprise.

"He has moved Lee's enemy from his path. Lo the Long Knife, whose name is the same as Lee's, was taken to-day in the battle by the Wyandot chief, Hoyoquim, and the white Indian Blackstaffe, and they have carried him away to work their will upon him."

I was struck with horror. Those who have followed this narrative know that I had no cause to love Jasper, but I shuddered when I thought of the hideous tortures that Hoyoquim and Blackstaffe would inflict upon him for his desertion. And after this came another thought: perhaps Rose Carew loved him! Could I bear to see her grief when she heard of his doom? When this second thought came to me I hesitated no longer.

"Come, Osseo," I said, "lead the way; we must bring my cousin back again."

"Lee is a strange man," he responded. "The Indian rejoices at the torture of his worst enemy, but the white man would rescue him. Manito has made us different, and it is not for Osseo to ask why. Come!"

He led the way through the forest, and I knew that we were upon the trail of Hoyoquim and his captive. I was to some extent a free lance and I was troubled by no qualms of conscience as I left the battlefield and the army behind me and sped on in pursuit of the Wyandot band. The trail lay broad and plain before us, but its state showed that the warriors were travelling fast. If we would rescue Jasper it must be done quickly. Yet we were sure that Hoyoquim did not anticipate pursuit, and this aided us, as, fearing no ambush, we travelled at great speed.

It was a brilliant day, the August sun pouring a flood of light upon the world. The forest stood out against the perfect blue of the sky like carved tracery. But the old silence, save for the murmur of the wind and the song of the birds, had returned to it. One could believe that the battle of the morning and destruction of the Indian power was a dream.

"The captive lagged here and they prodded him with their knives," said Osseo, not looking up. "Then he hastened."

I did not wonder that Jasper hurried before the knife points, and it was but a foretaste, too, of what awaited him.

The footsteps followed the bank of the river through woods and grass and across tributary creeks, and Osseo, watching with keen eyes, said that the warriors had not stopped once. Evidently they had some purpose in such a rapid and sustained flight, since the danger of ordinary pursuit had long since passed.

"Why do they hurry so fast and far?" I said to Osseo.

"Lee knows," he replied, without raising his head from the footsteps.

He spoke the truth. I knew even when I asked.

Noon came, and then the afternoon began to wane, but the sky was still a brilliant blue, save where little

clouds made spots of fleecy white upon its azure surface. The murmur of the wind did not cease, and by the river's brink wild flowers of red and purple and white nodded to its breath.

"The footsteps shorten," said Osseo. "The warriors do not hurry so much." Then he added, a few moments later: "Now they stop and talk with each other. The prisoner stands in the centre; and see, he falls to his knees!"

Poor Jasper! I knew why he was upon his knees, and I knew too how vain was his sacrifice of the white man's pride.

"Come, Osseo," I said, "let us hasten on."

"It is not far now," he replied. "Hoyoquim is sure at last that he is beyond pursuit, and he will soon begin the work for which he has come."

We followed more cautiously and slowly for about a half hour, and then Osseo, without a word of warning, sank suddenly to his knees. I imitated him at once, knowing that he did nothing without good reason, and then he pointed silently with his finger to the far side of the river.

The savages had crossed and already had begun their horrible task.

Jasper was bound to a tree with green withes, not so tightly that he could not move, but fast enough to cut off all hope of escape. The warriors and Blackstaffe were gathering dead wood for the torture and heaping it about his feet, while Hoyoquim stood before him and taunted him after the Indian fashion.

We crept forward among the thick bushes and high grass until we were separated from them only by the river. I can not forget the look of terror and despair on Jasper's face. Had the withes fallen of their own accord to the ground I do not believe that he could have made an effort to escape.

"Had they only waited until the morrow for this we might have saved him," I whispered to Osseo.

"'Tis too late," he replied. "Manito has spoken his will."

Hoyoquim turned presently, and then I saw his face also. It was the incarnation of savage and malignant triumph. To him Jasper was a traitor for whom the worst torture was too good, and he would spare him nothing; God had not delivered him into his hand that he might show him mercy. Hoyoquim was always an Indian of Indians and a Wyandot of Wyandots.

The warriors proceeded slowly and with care. It was a delight that they loved to linger over. One stopped now and then to join Hoyoquim in the task of taunting Jasper, but in a moment or two would return to his work of collecting dry wood and heaping it around the prisoner's feet.

Jasper never moved or uttered a word. The look of horror and despair in his eyes seemed to be fixed there. It affected me strangely. He was my enemy. That I knew. But he was my cousin too. We were of the same blood and the same name. I had seen other men in like position, but none stirred me in such a manner. How could I hide the story of this from Rose Carew? I longed for him to struggle against his thongs, to cry out, to reply to the jeers of the chief, to do or to say anything, rather than stand there, motionless and senseless, with that fixed look of horror upon his face. I shivered despite myself, but in a moment the face of Jasper drew me back. No matter what his faults, he was receiving his punishment and more.

We crept to the very edge of the bushes and trees that lined the brink, drawn by the hideous fascination of this scene. Higher grew the heap of wood around Jasper's feet, reaching now to his knees, but he noticed not, still staring with terrified eyes straight into the

air and seeing nothing. The renegade Blackstaffe presently joined Hoyoquim, and he too began to taunt Jasper, laughing with atrocious mirth at the face of the victim.

We could hear the taunts, but beyond this single blur there was nothing to disturb the peace and beauty of a summer day. Bubbles in delicate tints of purple and pink and blue floated for a moment on the silent sheet of the river, then broke and were gone. The gentle current made a murmur like a sigh that matched the note of the wind through the forest. In the open the long grass rippled like the surface of a lake swept by the mildest of southern breezes, and little birds in brilliant plumage sang, unscared, almost at our feet.

Hoyoquim spoke to one of the warriors, who presently came with a piece of dry wood burning at the end. The chief took it from his hand and waved it before the face of Jasper, who noticed it not, merely staring with that horror-stricken gaze into the blue of the skies.

Hoyoquim bent down and applied the torch to the heap of wood built around Jasper. The dry boughs ignited readily and little blazes began to rise.

The savages stood in a semicircle before the victim, their faces expressing triumphant anticipation.

I looked into the eyes of Osseo. His gaze met mine, and he understood.

"There is no other way," he said.

The warriors came a little closer to their victim, but the next moment there was the sharp crack of a rifle, a puff of white smoke, and a vacant look came over Jasper's face. Then his head fell forward on his breast, and he passed forever from the power of his captors.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE MEETING OF THE CHIEFS

Osseo and I, after the shot, leaped from the bushes and ran southward, knowing well that Hoyoquim and his warriors would follow hot upon us. Yet we could not use our utmost speed at first, as it was needful for one of us to reload his rifle. But when this was done we ran faster. We heard nothing after the shot save one long, fierce war-whoop, and then came the silence of tenacious Indian pursuit.

We expected no easy escape. The cunning chief and the renegade would guess from some clew who we were, and every motive would urge them to our capture. Yet our blood thrilled with other emotions than those of fear. It was a test of skill and endurance, but if overtaken that was not the end; we should be as hard to hold as a wounded panther. Then my mind went back again to that ghastly face beside the river. I looked at Osseo, and, as before, he knew of what I was thinking.

"It was the will of Manito that it should be done," he said.

We paused a moment at the top of a little hill, and, glancing back, I saw the long grass moving at the edge of the forest. I knew that the warriors, having crossed the river at once, were there, and were following us at great speed.

"We may have to fight, Osseo," I said.

"It may be so," he replied, "and I ask Lee that he leave the chief, Hoyoquim, to me."

I was surprised at Osseo's tone, and when I looked at him I saw that his eyes were flashing. He seemed to be moved by a deep emotion that broke through the Indian calm. There must be some feud between him and Hoyoquim, as I had guessed before, and I spoke at once.

"I shall not stand between you, Osseo," I said.

We resumed our flight, plunging once more into the deep forest, running with long, easy strides.

"Let us go now in a curve, like the bending of a bow," said Osseo presently.

"Why so?" I asked.

"The Wyandots will see it and think then to cut us off," he replied, "and the warriors will divide. One party will follow the curve of the bow and the others will follow the string. Then if we be overtaken it will be by fewer warriors, and, if we must fight, Manito alone knows whether the Wyandots or Osseo and his friend are to be the victors."

I turned as he wished without another word, and we went on in silence for many minutes. Then I noticed that Osseo's speed was slackening, and I was surprised. He was as if made of steel, and never had I known him to show fatigue in so short a time; but, looking at him carefully, I saw no sign of weariness.

"Why do you check your speed, Osseo?" I asked.

"Why should we hurry and waste our breath?" he replied. "Are we fawns, that we flee thus from the hunter?"

I saw again that flash in his eye, and I knew what was passing in the soul of Osseo.

"How many are following us now?" I asked.

He dropped down suddenly and put his ear to the earth.

"But four," he replied, springing up.

"Think you that the chief, Hoyoquim, is among them?"

"As sure as the sun shines."

"Then we shall lead them farther away from their comrades."

We made a deeper curve of the bow, turning far to the westward, and went on for almost an hour. Then Osseo, looking at me with that old faint, humorous twinkle in his eye, said:

"I grow as weak as a sick woman, and I can run no farther."

There was not a drop of sweat on him, and he was as strong as steel.

"I must rest, or I die," he said, his eyes yet twinkling.

"Then, Osseo," I said, "it is better to rest than to die."

He sat down on a fallen log, and I sat down beside him, each holding his rifle across his knees.

"Lee," said Osseo, "it seems to me that some one comes for us."

"Osseo speaks the truth," I replied.

The bushes parted suddenly, and our pursuers leaped into view—Hoyoquim, the renegade, and two warriors. They uttered the triumphant war-whoop at sight of us, and fired just as our fingers pressed our own triggers.

Their bullets, discharged with hasty aim, missed the mark, but not so ours; our hands were steady from the rest, and we had marked the target true. The two warriors fell dead.

Then Osseo, casting down his empty rifle, drew his tomahawk. Hoyoquim did the same, and the two rushed into the glade. Each threw his tomahawk and each lightly sprang aside, the weapon whizzing by. Then, drawing their knives, they closed in a fierce combat.

I had lost my pistol somehow in the battle, and I was reloading my rifle with all the speed that I could com-

mand. The renegade was doing likewise, but my weapon was levelled again and my finger on the trigger just as he withdrew the ramrod.

"Don't raise your rifle!" I cried. "This is no fight of ours!"

He let the weapon drop to his side, and stared at the two chiefs twined now in deadly strife, their black eyes flashing with hate, the great muscles standing upon their brown arms, and their breath short and spasmodic with their tremendous efforts. Yet neither uttered a cry, and neither sought with his eyes the help of the friend who stood near. I could have sent a bullet more than once into the body of the Wyandot chief, but I had given my word to my comrade, and there was no excuse for me to break it.

So evenly matched were they that they scarce shifted from the spot upon which they stood. Each grasped the other by the wrist, and neither could strike with his knife or tear the hand away. Watching them, I was unable to say that either had the advantage by the breadth of a hair.

How long a time passed I know not, but when I will it I can yet see those two fierce faces so close to each other and so full of hate. Nature had made them a splendid pair, equal in height and breadth and weight, and now she had brought them together to see which was the finer work of hers.

They began presently to move a little in their struggle, feet crushing upon the earth, and arms swaying slightly. I heard their loud, spasmodic breathing. Presently the form of Hoyoquim bent back a little, and Osseo bent over him. It was the end. Osseo with a sudden supreme effort tore his wrist loose from the hand of Hoyoquim, his knife flashed aloft, and the next instant it was buried in the breast of the Wyandot chieftain.

Hoyoquim reeled away, but Osseo stood where he

was, motionless, his face without expression. The Wyandot plucked the knife from his breast with all his failing strength and hurled it at his enemy. Still holding himself erect, he gave us one look of defiance from drooping and bloodshot eyes, then uttered a long and thrilling war-whoop, which died away in a quaver as he fell dead at our feet.

I heard the snap of a gunlock, and wheeling about, saw the rifle of the renegade levelled at Osseo. I fired instantly and without raising my weapon to my shoulder, but the bullet sped true. The renegade fell on his face without a cry, and the earth was one black scoundrel the less.

Osseo looked down at the face of the dead Wyandot chief.

"He was a great warrior and a brave man," he said.

When he had spoken this simple tribute to his enemy we resumed our flight.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE OUTCAST'S RETURN

THE coach-and-six swung rapidly forward in the beautiful sunshine, and I looked about at the peaceful country, the neat farm-houses, the stone fences, and the cultivated fields. The wilderness is fine in a way of its own, and the inhabited country in another, also its own. It is not for me to preach the beauty of one to the exclusion of the other, particularly when I see both.

Yet it took my eyes a long time to grow used to the sight of houses and fences and men working in the fields. I was coming home after nearly fifteen years in the wilderness, and habit was still strong upon me. It was hard for me to believe that no danger lurked in the wood ahead; and our driver, as he swung his great whip and cracked it over his horses with a sound like a rifle shot, seemed to me to approach it with criminal carelessness. I felt instinctively for my rifle, but the weapon was not there, and I laughed softly to myself.

"Yonder is Philadelphia!" exclaimed Winchester.

We were on top of the coach, and rising to my full height, at the imminent risk of being pitched into the road on my head, I gazed at the tips of Philadelphia's church spires shining in the late afternoon sun. Yes, it was our great town, the old town in which so much of my boyhood had been spent, and of which I had so many memories.

I did not wish to speak, and Winchester, understand-

ing, was silent. Fate had decreed to me a life full of striking contrasts so far, but none greater than this. We had come at once from the wilderness by the way of old Fort Duquesne, where we took the coach for Philadelphia, and now we were at the heart of our civilization. It was like a sudden trip from a different world.

But I was not to enter Philadelphia at once. Another and greater duty awaited me. The driver, obedient to my request, stopped at a point where a small road led off from the main line of travel.

"I leave thee here, Jerry," I said to the driver—he was Jerry Goddard, a veteran of the Pennsylvania line, and I had known him at once, though he did not know me—"and here's one of Mr. Hamilton's new dollars for thee, Jerry, to drink to the memory of the old days."

He took the money and stared at me. Then he shook his head. He could not remember—I had not told him my name. He blew his horn, and the coach swung forward at a lively rate, driver and horses alike eager for their supper in Philadelphia. I saw him looking back at me from the top of the next rise, but I had not moved from the roadside, and he was compelled to go on, his curiosity ungratified.

Then I turned into the narrow road and walked toward a grove of trees which looked black and impenetrable at the distance. Yes, it was I, John Lee, I said to myself as doubts arose; John Lee in a sober suit of gray, though his hat was cocked and there were silver buckles on his shoes; John Lee, of Philadelphia, not the wild hunter who carried his life, night and day, on the touch of his trigger—that seemed now to be another man.

The wood thinned out as I approached. Then the slate roof of the house and the red of the brick walls appeared through the trees. A western window blazed like fire in the light of the setting sun. It was at

once a joy and a pain to see that nothing was changed. Well, Jasper had been a good tenant, and he was past blame now.

There was a field on my right, and a man who had been at work in it was riding his horse home, the harness rattling about him. I wondered if he knew me, and half feared, half wished, that he would call my name. But he did not turn his face, and rode on, unnoticing.

The road, well kept I observed, led straight to the gates of the little park in which the manor-house stood. All about me was neat and thrifty, and I said to myself again that Jasper had been a good tenant. I stopped a moment at the park gate of iron with the brass filigree work at the top which my grandfather had brought from England, and of which he was so proud. The same old griffins stared at me from the tops of the stone posts beside the gate, and I found myself staring back at them as I used to do when I was a child. Then, passing my hand inside the gate, I pressed the spring that opened it and entered the park, walking along the shell avenue between the great elms. They looked smaller to me than when I last saw them, yet in truth they were larger; fifteen years makes a difference in perspective. The catalpa trees in front of the house were in fresh and full bloom, great masses of white that almost hid the building.

The park, though showing the same care and neatness that marked the fields, was deserted. All seemed to be prepared for human life, but human life itself was lacking. A dog came at last from behind one of the outbuildings and looked at me. Then, without opening his mouth, he trotted back to his covert. "I am not of sufficient importance to be barked at now," I said, with a sort of self-pity.

Ours was a fine mansion—nay, it has been called a great one—of red brick, three stories in the centre with

a two-story wing on either side and a handsome portico, the pillars, wreathed with vines, framing the main entrance in the centre. Some of the leaves from the roses blooming on the vines had fallen on the floor of the portico, but there was naught else to see. Here was still the same fresh cleanliness and the same lack of human presence.

I lifted the heavy brass double knocker, and then, taking second thought with myself, I pushed the door; it opened easily, and I entered the house in which I was born. Here, too, there was no change. The great hall, wainscotted with polished mahogany, and the mahogany balustrade of the grand staircase, looked neither blacker nor older than when I left. This balustrade, carved by hand to represent baskets of fruit and flowers, was another object of my grandfather's pride, and there just above the floor was the little notch which I had cut to show my youthful prowess, and for which I received a just punishment.

I pushed open a door on the right-hand side of the hall and entered a room that had been my father's, a large, light apartment. It was precisely as it had been in his day, each piece of furniture in the old position, and there on the wall hung the famous portrait of my grandfather, Geoffrey Lee, painted in London by Sir Godfrey Kneller, a heavy but handsome man in a velvet coat, ornamented with silver lace and buttons, the face clear and strong and surmounted by the large, flowing wig of the period—a fine, courtly man, whose firm character showed in every feature. It was he who built Stoneham, our house, and created the estate; and here was I, the last of the race, upon which I had brought disgrace, staring into his eyes. But he did not reproach me nor did he commend.

The face of my father, painted by a lesser artist, was not so strong, but more benignant; and there, too, was my mother, a slender woman with mild blue eyes.

I sat by the table in the centre of the room, how long I know not, in that strange silence, until I heard a step behind me as light as that of a cat; and then old Godfrey, faithful old Godfrey Landale, was beside me. He seized my hand, and the tears that ran down his withered cheek fell upon it.

"It is you, Master John! It is you at last!" he said. "I have been waiting for you!"

"Through all these years, Godfrey?"

"Through all these years."

"And through all the disgrace, Godfrey?"

"It was a lie, Master John. I never believed it."

"No, Godfrey," I said, "you did not believe it, and you would not have believed it had I been guilty, which I was not."

Then we both fell silent, for our memories were heavy upon us. He had always been an old man to me, but seen now by the older eyes which diminish effects, his age did not sit more heavily upon him than fifteen years before.

"There have been no changes here, Godfrey," I said at last.

"The other one made them," he said, "but when I heard of his death I put everything back as it was."

I knew that he was speaking of Jasper, but Godfrey would never recall him by name. He always spoke of him as the "other one."

He brought me my supper there presently, and insisted upon serving it with his own hands, watching me with jealous care. He asked me no questions. Whether he knew aught of the fifteen years I could not say, but he seemed to have no curiosity.

"Do you wish to see any of the others, Master John?" he said presently.

"Is Sam still here?" I asked.

Sam was the black coachman. He left the room and returned soon with Sam, a gigantic man who cried like

a baby at sight of me, and yet stared at me curiously, as if he were not quite sure that I was I. Then I told them both to say nothing of my presence until I bade them. I was not yet sure of my position. The estate was mine; though escheated from me once, it had come back to me as Jasper's heir, and surely they could not take it from me again, after my work in the West, which General Wayne had been kind enough to call good. But Winchester was to come on the morrow and tell me the news. I wondered what effect the arrival of the traitor, John Lee, would have upon Philadelphia. Perhaps this great town of fifty thousand people, occupied with many things, had long since forgotten him! It was likely.

After Godfrey and Sam went out I took from my pocket an envelope of pale blue, sealed with red wax, and stamped with the arms of the Carews. It was inscribed to John Lee, Esq., and the letter inside, written in a small, clear hand, was but a line or two; it said:

"I beg to remind you of your promise that we should see you in Philadelphia, and to tell you that we hold you to it. Y's,

"ROSE CAREW.

"TO CAPTAIN JOHN LEE,
AT CINCINNATI, ON THE OHIO."

It had reached me at Cincinnati, and if I had felt any weakening of my resolve this would have roused my courage. I had not seen Miss Carew immediately upon my return to Wayne's army, and I had sent Winchester to tell her of Jasper's death, which I said had occurred under the tomahawk of the savages; in truth, I saw her only once before her return to the East, and I did not have the heart to speak to her of Jasper. Major Carew, however, had talked of him with deep regret, and mourned him as one of the best of men.

I went to sleep that night in my own bedroom, in the high brass bed upon which I climbed by means of a little

ladder, drawing the curtains around me, and about the middle of the night I awoke with a strange, oppressive feeling as if I were suffering from a nightmare. I sprang from the bed, sure in my semi-somnolent condition that enemies were upon me. I grasped at a weapon, and then remembered with a foolish little laugh that none was there. I opened the window, letting the free, fresh air flow in, and again I laughed at myself. I, a son of the wilderness, who slept under the trees, had not been in a curtained bed in fifteen years. I would not tell Godfrey of this. I must accustom myself gradually to bedrooms.

I slept the remainder of the night in front of the window, and Winchester came to see me early the next day.

"This Philadelphia of yours," he said, "is a fine and bustling town. I saw the President himself out driving, and the streets are full of macaronis. There's life here."

"I mean to see a little of it," I said.

The desire to see this old town with which my early years were united was so strong, now that I was near, that I would have risked everything to go there. Then, too, Rose Carew had asked me to come. But she could scarce do less for a broken man to whom she owed so much. It struck me for the first time what a trifle her letter was. She might have said more to one who had saved her from the savages.

But I let Winchester see nothing of these thoughts. He was manifestly in high spirits, and I sympathized with him. His wife was with the Carews on High Street, and both anticipated a period of gaiety in Philadelphia. He brought letters from General Wayne and other influential men in the West, and despite some coldness which then existed among us toward the English people—due rather to trouble over the Northwestern posts than to memories of the Revolutionary War—there could be no

doubt of his kind reception. I felt for a little while a strange sort of jealousy of Winchester. He, a foreigner, could enjoy himself in my native town, while I was debarred, and debarred unjustly. I had looked in the mirror again that morning and found myself yet young, without a wrinkle or a gray hair, and I felt that I could have sported it with the gayest macaroni of them all. But the feeling of envy disappeared in a few moments. One could not hold it in the presence of Winchester.

"Have they heard of my arrival in Philadelphia?" I asked, "or am I wholly forgotten?"

Now, I wished him to reply that I was not forgotten. I preferred persecution to oblivion.

"You are not forgotten," he replied, "and your arrival is known. I heard it mentioned by two or three persons, but only casually, and not in a way that had meaning."

He was to return to the city in the afternoon, and would see me again on the morrow. Meanwhile I would remain at Stoneham.

"Bring me a newspaper," I said to him as he departed, and he nodded.

I was hungry for the sight of the Gazette or the Advertiser, merely to see familiar names, and the old routine of news, or perhaps there would be something about myself, showing how the town was likely to take me.

But when Winchester came the next day he was taciturn and evasive. I asked him for the newspaper, but he shrugged his shoulders and said that he had forgotten it. "At any rate, there is nothing in those little sheets but advertisements of sales, notices of arrivals at the port, and other uninteresting trifles," he said. I saw him a half hour later talking in a low voice to Godfrey, and when he noticed me he seemed confused and troubled. I inferred at once that my affairs were going

badly, and I determined that he should not burn his fingers to help me.

"Winchester," I said, "it was wrong for me to come here. My presence in Philadelphia will not be taken well."

He pursed his lips and replied slowly, and, as I saw, with caution:

"'Tis past human wisdom, Lee, to tell about such matters, but having come, I would even go through with the business. 'Tis not in your nature, I think, to retreat now."

No, it was not my intent to withdraw, but I felt a great sinking of the spirits, of which, however, I did not tell Winchester.

CHAPTER XL

THE VISIT TO THE CITY

I REMAINED at Stoneham four days, a hermit, or rather a prisoner, in my own house. Winchester visited me once more, but intimated that I should not leave until he came for me. Godfrey and the remainder of the men on the place seemed worried, and I caught them more than once whispering to each other, a conference that always broke up in a confused manner at my approach. But I was too proud to ask what troubles were before me or let them know of the sinking of the heart which I now felt so often.

Winchester returned on the evening of the fourth day.

"I think it best for you to come into town with me to-morrow, Lee," he said. "The news of your being here is spreading, and 'tis the cause of some talk. I would face it at once. And if I were you, Lee, I would put on my bravest apparel—your captain's uniform, you know—and choose your best horse, and we will ride together to the Carews. Mrs. Winchester is anxious to see you; she says that you have been secluding yourself too long."

Winchester seemed to me to take a just view of the affair. It was poor and discreditable tactics to be so bold at a distance and then to flinch in the face of the enemy. Hence I arrayed myself in my captain's uniform, shaved with extreme care, and selected the finest horse in the stable, a very presentable bay, having

throughout the assistance of Godfrey and Sam. I knew that whatever might befall, these two faithful souls would remain loyal to me.

But I did not use the horse which I selected, as a handsome coach, with gilt panels and drawn by four horses, rattled up to the gates of Stoneham.

"It's mine," said Winchester, "or rather I hired it; 'twas the best that money could find in Philadelphia, and I think on the whole I have done well. Honour me by getting in, will you, Lee?"

I sprang in, and there was Mrs. Winchester, very blonde and very beautiful, in silk of lilac and rose, with her hair drawn up monstrously high on her head in the fashion known as the "Queen's Nightcap."

"Since you would not come to see your friends, Captain Lee," she said, "your friends have come for you."

She was a good woman, and I was grateful to her for upholding me thus, feeling in truth somewhat ashamed that I did not have fit words in which to thank her.

Winchester entered the coach after me, the liveried driver cracked his whip, and we whirled away toward Philadelphia. Winchester, although it was a brilliant sunny morning, closed the coach door, and when I remarked upon it, said that we should at least go to the Carews unobserved. He seemed to me to be right, and I sighed that I should have to enter Philadelphia, in a way, concealed.

But I knew by passing glimpses through the glass that we had turned into the Germantown road, and would thus enter the city. This recalled to me the battle there, in which I, a mere slip of a boy, had borne my part, and when I aroused myself from these memories we were entering Philadelphia itself. Then I could not be restrained from looking through the glass door at the familiar houses, the streets, the church spires, and all the old sights known so well. But the

streets seemed very silent for the great town that I had known and the greater town that they said it had become.

"Why, Philadelphia is as dull and sober as a New England village on Sunday," I said to Winchester.

"The active part of the town has shifted since your time," he replied. "Scarce any business is done in this quarter now."

Our carriage now approached the heart of the city, and suddenly I heard a great shout ahead of us.

"'Tis the soldiers," said Winchester, "and the people are cheering at the sight of the arms and the gay clothes. By my faith, Lee, despite all the Yankee talk about the dignity and rights of freeborn citizens, your populace is as frivolous and fond of the spectacular as any that we have in England."

"And behold Captain Lee himself, who for so many years has practised the stoicism of the Indian, showing as much vain curiosity as any of them!" exclaimed Mrs. Winchester, leaning forward and putting her shoulders between me and the glass door.

"As I can not see through a lady in any sense," I said, "I yield," and I leaned back in my seat.

The shouting increased, and 'twas a great tumult made by many thousand voices. Then I heard the crash, not of one band, but of two or three or more, and so much sound, falling upon ears long accustomed to the silence of the wilderness, was doubled or tripled in effect.

"'Tis a great celebration evidently," I said to Winchester.

"Ay," he replied; "I think it is the anniversary of one of your battles with us. There's to be a review of a great number of your old troops by the President. I've told our driver to take us by, and perhaps we may see a little of the spectacle."

We went on, and the shouting continued to grow, and as the coach began to proceed but slowly, I judged

that we were now well into the crowd. Then we stopped suddenly, and Winchester said:

"Let's get out, Lee."

He threw open the door, and without giving me time to ask the reason of his strange action, plucked me by the arm. I was out of the coach in a moment, blinded by the dazzling sunlight, and deafened by the roar of ten thousand voices in my ears.

But I distinguished the cries:

"It is he! it is he! Lee! Lee!"

All the blood rushed to my head. I had not expected such fierce and prompt resentment as this.

"Forgive me, Winchester, for bringing you and your wife among such wolves as these!" I cried, and I tried to draw my sword that I might drive back the leaders of the mob.

But he seized my arm and, laughing in my face, cried out:

"Save your sword for another day, Lee!"

Then he released me, and the shouting of the crowd ceased, a deep murmur taking its place. I looked around me and saw that I was in front of Independence Hall. The street was crowded with people as far as my eyes reached, but in a moment they separated, forming a narrow lane between. My arms were suddenly seized by two men, and even in that moment of confusion and excitement I knew them. They were the colonel and lieutenant-colonel of my old regiment in the full uniform of the Pennsylvania line.

Then the shouting was renewed, with double strength, so it seemed to me, and all the bands played at once. The officers walked forward, and I, as one dazed, walked with them, without resistance. We passed through the crowd, and then between lines of soldiers, and I began to see around me many faces that I knew—good comrades of the camp and field. The shouting and the music never ceased, and my eyes were blurred with

tears, but I was conscious in a few moments that I stood in the presence of a very tall man in the Continental uniform, our immortal leader himself, and beyond him I saw Hamilton and Knox and Lear, and then a tall girl whose eyes were dewy. The shouting and the music stopped, and the President said:

"John Lee, you were accused and convicted of an infamous crime once, and now after fifteen years we find that you were not guilty. Yet with dishonour falsely resting upon you, you have served your country and served it well. 'Tis never too late to undo a wrong. Therefore the Congress of the republic presents you with this sword in place of the one that was broken before you, and also with this resolution of thanks, and with other perhaps more solid rewards of which you shall hear later. And may I shake your hand, John Lee?"

They thrust forward a great, gold-hilted sword and a roll of rustling parchment, and the President grasped my hand in both of his.

Then the thunder of the crowd and the crash of the bands began again, and I was glad of it, because I could not speak.

The President took my arm and led the way to his carriage, a great cream-coloured coach drawn by cream-coloured horses with white manes, and helped me in with his own hand. Then Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Knox, and Mr. Lear, the President's chief secretary, followed us there, and I became conscious that we were moving.

"Where are we going? What is to be done?" I said.

"We are going where we are welcome, and we shall do what is pleasant," replied the President, gravely taking a pinch of snuff.

The shouting continued and followed us, and when the coach stopped a great crowd was still around it. But

it made way for us, and we approached a red-brick house with three stone steps leading up to the front door.

"Mr. Morris's place," I cried. I had played in the woods before it many a time.

"Ay, it's Mr. Morris's," replied the President, "but I live there now."

It was true. This was now the home of the President of the United States, and I entered it arm in arm with its tenant, the others following behind and the crowd yet lingering about. They showed me the finest guest chamber, and left me alone, though Winchester presently joined me there. He sat down near a window and laughed with deep content.

"Well, Lee," he said, "was your reception sufficiently hostile to please you?"

Then I laughed too. I was compelled to do so, as a relief to my feelings.

"Winchester," I said, "how did this happen?"

"Ask your President," he replied. "He seems to be the master of ceremonies, and I am willing to swear that none could manage them better. But keep yourself composed, Lee. There is to be a great state dinner, with your distinguished self as the guest of honour, and while you are waiting you might look at this newspaper, which I would not give you the other day."

He tossed me a copy of the Gazette, and then I read the story how John Lee had been accused and convicted, and now was proved innocent. For the sake of the dead man who was of my own blood I will not dwell on the wretched tale. It was Jasper who was the traitor, who had plotted with the enemy, and who, when he was in danger of detection, had placed his incriminating letters among my belongings, where they were found. He was Lieutenant J. Lee and so was I; with cunning prevision he had used in the correspondence only the initial J., and he had spoken of himself, too, in such a manner that it seemed to be I and not he who was meant. In

the face of such evidence my denials amounted to nothing. I wonder if Jasper ever felt remorse? Then the newspaper told that Congress had voted me a sword, a resolution of thanks, the restoration of Stoneham, and a great tract of land in the Northwestern Territory which I had fought with such valour and skill—I quote the Gazette—to save for the republic.

"There is more to the tale than the newspaper tells," said Winchester, "but you are likely to hear of that later."

We were summoned after a while to the best drawing-room of the President's wife, a large chamber with a great crystal chandelier hanging in the centre of the ceiling, beneath which she stood, a little lady with hair drawn, like Mrs. Winchester's, high upon her head, in order to give her the effect of greater height. She remembered me well, she said, a brown-haired boy, noted for his recklessness and excessive trust in human nature, and spoke as if there had been nothing unusual in my life since then.

We went presently into the dining-room, where the state dinner was served, the President of course presiding, a magnificent figure in black velvet knee-breeches and coat, and pearl satin waistcoat set off with fine linen and lace and glittering buckles. I saw around me the foreign ministers, the members of the Cabinet, Mr. and Mrs. Winchester, Underwood, now member of Congress from Kentucky, my old colonel and lieutenant-colonel, a French gentleman of distinguished appearance whom I afterward learned to be the Duc de Liancourt—I have just read in a French journal his account of "cette affaire extraordinaire," as he termed this event; and beyond him two familiar faces—one that of De Chamillard, and the other, to my deep surprise, Osseo; yes, it was the Son of the Evening Star, his magnificent embroidered blue blanket drawn in graceful folds over his shoulders, and the humorous light twinkling in his eyes

as they met mine, the son of the woods himself not one whit abashed by the mahogany and china and silver and brilliant uniforms, but calm, perfectly poised, and never looking more thoroughly the chief than at that moment.

"And in all your glory can you not find one word for me?"

It was Rose Carew, who had slipped quietly into the seat beside me.

"'Tis not my fault that I am sitting in this chair," she said. "The President's wife made me come here. 'Twas your duty to bring me out, but they forgot to tell you somehow, and behold, I am come."

She looked up at me with eyes brightly smiling, and I felt a great rush of happiness. There had been two Rose Carews before, the girl whom I had rescued in the woods and the proud woman of fashion, but now they were the same; my wood nymph and the most beautiful woman in Philadelphia were one.

I have never had a distinct recollection of that dinner, because even then my impressions were only of light, colour, many bright faces, and a great joy. And yet it was ceremonious in all its aspects. It was superintended by the famous Uncle Harkless himself, a dainty macaroni in black small-clothes, blue silk stockings, and huge blue cloth coat with velvet collar and great metal buttons shining like silver. But too many great surprises had burst upon me at once to leave me in a calm mind; and when at last they toasted me, standing, as one whom his country could never repay, but would try, the President himself pronouncing the words, I could stammer but a little in reply.

I met Osseo later, and he saluted me with much gravity.

"Well, Osseo," I said with some pride, "I am at last proved to be an innocent man."

"It is so," he replied; "but Lee is no better in the sight of Manito now than he was before."

Such was the faith of this Indian. When he liked one, the opinion of the world concerning that man was nothing to him.

"I have come to see the great city where men tread upon each other," he continued. "The Tornado asked me to come, and I have brought with me the mad Frenchman, who is not less mad here than he is in the forest."

I stood alone with the President at last, an opportunity for which I had been waiting long, and I poured out my thanks.

"It is you and the Congress who have done this," I said.

He laughed.

"You deceive yourself easily, Captain Lee," he said. "I believed your case closed, and even had I thought otherwise I have had no opportunity in all these years to review it. Nor do Congresses occupy themselves with the old wrongs of an individual. You must look elsewhere, Captain Lee."

"I am at a loss," I said, and truly I was.

"There is no one," he replied, "who would do so much for a man but a woman. There is no one in the first instance who would have the faith in his innocence but a woman, and there is no one who, having it, would come here from the West, toil two years to prove that innocence, searching among mouldy old documents, sending to England to procure from my Lord Cornwallis himself the proof that it was Jasper Lee and not John Lee who was the criminal, and then, even before her case was complete, going back into the wilderness to follow this man and save his life from the treachery of another. She must have had a powerful motive to do so much, and I think that on the whole he will be repaid for all that he has suffered. Go into the garden and you will find some one who can tell you about it."

CHAPTER XLI

PAID IN FULL

THERE was behind the presidential house a walled garden, bright with summer fruit and flowers, and I stepped into it, my heart filled with thankfulness for all the great repayment that was being made to me, and yet I was oppressed too by a sense of diffidence. She seemed for the moment further away from me than ever, too good for any man of whom I had ever heard.

I saw her there on a stone seat beneath a great rose-bush that curved over her head, and from which petals of pink or white fell one by one upon her or at her feet. And her face was alternately the colour of the petals.

I stood for a little while gazing at her, and the feeling of my own unworthiness grew upon me. I remembered now that in all our troubles and dangers it was she who never uttered a word of despair; it was she who bade me hope that I might yet win back my name, and at last it was she and none other to whom I owed the success of my effort. In those old days in the wilderness I had believed that she was in my debt, but now she had repaid me and more, and I felt the need of humility.

"Are you so soon tired of all your honours?" she asked.

"No, I am not tired," I replied. "It would be false to say that I do not enjoy them, but a magnet even greater has drawn me away."

She did not speak, but bent her head a little lower. The roses still fell at her feet, and the colour in her cheeks yet matched them.

"A man was condemned once by the world and condemned unjustly," I said. "Then he fled into the wilderness and grew hard and bitter. He thought that the old wrong done him would never be undone. He began to believe that the wild men were better than those whom he left behind. He even felt a certain pride in his condemnation, false though it was, because he was strong enough to bear it. But a woman came into the wilderness, and she showed him, but not by words, how wrong were his pride and stubbornness. He loved her, and, though she was above him and far from him, he told her so, not because he believed that his love would be returned, but because he was proud to love her, and proud, too, to avow it."

She was yet silent, and now did not look at me.

"He was glad to serve her," I continued, "and he felt much secret joy to have done so. He was glad to have her under obligation to him, and when she went back to the city and he to the woods he still rejoiced, because he thought her in his debt, and that he would keep her there. But he did not know her full nobility. While he was nourishing such a foolish pride she was toiling and planning for him, and now his debt to her is so great that he can never pay it."

"You estimate her too highly," she said at last.

"I do not. It is you, and you alone, to whom I owe this reparation," I said.

"I knew from the first that you were innocent, and it would have been poor repayment for all that you saved me from had I not proved you so," she replied. Then she continued, "I suppose now that your good name is restored, you will go back to the West."

"I do not know," I replied. "There is yet some-

thing lacking, and if I do not win it I shall. But it may be that there is another way."

A sudden deep colour suffused her face, and she looked down.

"I search my heart," I said, "to find if there is not another way, but I know that the answer is only in yours. I told you once, back there in the forest, Rose, that I loved you, but I told you then without hope. I tell you again that I love you, and shall love you always. It is only this that keeps me waiting. I do not want now to go back to the West."

"It may be that there is another way," she said, flushing rosily, and dropping her eyes.

"Can it be," I cried, seizing her hands, "that you love me enough to keep me here?"

The red was still in her cheeks as she whispered:

"You have found the other way."

THE END

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